

CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC IDENTITIES:
IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS AMONG AMERICAN CATHOLICS

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my large and loving family,
which is both diverse and mostly Catholic;
To Rob, who walked with me on this journey as both a friend and mentor;
And especially to my wife Jen
who has always kept me focused on what is most important in life.

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While conflicts between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews once dominated the religious, social and political landscape, it has been argued that these have been supplanted by divisions between the religious right and left. My dissertation examines self-identified traditional, moderate and liberal Catholics and explores the forces that divide them from each other and those that unify them. Using national survey data from the General Social Survey and 50 in-depth interviews I conducted in three Midwestern cities, I examine the meaning of these religious identities to ordinary Catholics, detail their competing visions of Church, and consider the social bases of these divisions.

Following the lead of other scholars, I examine whether Catholics' religious identities are created by religious movements. After exploring various traditional and liberal Catholic movement organizations, I examine whether Catholics' religious identities are connected to these movements and organizations. However, I find that most ordinary Catholics are not familiar with traditional and liberal movement organizations or periodicals. So, while these movements may be important in institutionalizing identities and garnering media attention for religious disagreements, the origins of religious identity for the majority of Catholics must be found elsewhere.

Most Catholics indicate that their understanding of religious identities comes through everyday interaction with other Catholics and acknowledged the importance of politics, as well as demographics, especially cohort, for dividing Catholics into different categories. Using national survey data, I find that Cohort and education are the best predictors of religious identity among Catholics, and suggest that these form the social

sources of Catholic division. I also argue that the intergenerational character of this divide helps in managing conflict between traditionalists and liberals because much cross group contact occurs within families and is thus less conflictual than movement-oriented interaction.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1- Introduction: A Diverse Church in a Political World	1
Chapter 2- Traditional, Moderate and Liberal Catholics.....	39
Chapter 3- Constructing Cognitive Maps: Catholics as Cultural Agents	86
Chapter 4- Social Fissures: Socio-Demographic Sources of Division	127
Chapter 5- Conclusion: Holding the Church Together	167

List of Tables and Figures

Table	Page
1.1 Catholic Identification at St. Alphonsus Parish	22
1.2 Catholic Identification at St. John's Parish	31
1.3 Catholic Identification at St. Boniface Parish	36
2.1 Open-Ended Catholic Identification	41
2.2 Forced Choice Catholic Identification: GSS and In-Depth Interviews	43
2.3 Measuring Symbolic Boundaries	76
2.4 Are Differences Healthy or Destructive?	80
3.1 Catholic Religious Movement Groups, Periodicals, Etc.	92
3.2 Traditional and Liberal Catholic Organizations Identified by Respondents.	100
3.3 Number of Movement Organizations Identified by Respondent	101
3.4 Consideration of Joining a Movement	104
3.5 Ability to Identify Movement Groups/Media	106
3.6 Orientations Dividing Traditionals and Liberals	118
3.7 Catholic Identification by Political Views	124
4.1 Model Fit Statistics for Various Multinomial Logit Models of Catholic Religious Identification	148
4.2 Odds Ratios from Multinomial Logit of Catholic Identification, General Social Survey, Catholic Subsample 1998 & 2000	149
4.3 Odds Ratios from Multinomial Logit of Political Identification, General Social Survey, Catholic Subsample 1998 & 2000	158
4.4 Contrasting the Gender and Class Cleavages of Party Identification with their lack in Religious Identification	160
4.5 Fertility by Catholic Identification	165
Figure	Page
3.1 Percent Volunteering Each Issue as Dividing Traditional and Liberal Catholics	116
4.1 Predictions for Catholics' Identifications As Education Varies	150
4.2 Predictions for Catholics' Identifications As Cohort Varies	152
4.3 Predictions for Catholics' Identifications As Education Varies	159
4.4 Predictions for Liberal Catholic and Democratic Identification As Cohort Varies	162

Chapter 1- Introduction: A Diverse Church in a Political World

In the spring of 2004, John Kerry became only the third Catholic to be nominated for the presidency of the United States by a major party. Forty-four years earlier, John Kennedy, the second Catholic to receive such a nomination, was elected President of the United States in November of 1960. Briefly contrasting these two presidential candidates, their electoral campaigns, and the eventual electoral outcomes provides a good backdrop for discussing the dilemmas of contemporary American Catholic identity.

John F. Kennedy was Rose and Joseph Kennedy's second son. His father, Joe Sr., was a former ambassador to Great Britain, a Catholic, and a self-made millionaire. Allegedly, much of the Kennedy fortune was amassed as a result of illegal distribution of alcohol during Prohibition, but regardless of its origins, the Kennedy family used their wealth and political influence to successfully gain entry into high society, and their son Jack grew up enjoying the privileged status of a New England elite. Jack graduated from Harvard University and later joined the Navy to serve in WWII. He became a decorated war hero for his service during the war, and decided to enter into politics upon his return home. First serving as a Congressman and then a Senator from Massachusetts, Jack was eventually nominated in the summer of 1960 to be the first Catholic Democratic presidential candidate since Al Smith's unsuccessful bid for the White House as the Democratic nominee in 1928.

In the summer of 1960, Jack Kennedy was attacked for being Catholic. Like Al Smith before him, he was attacked by Protestants who charged that a Catholic could never be President. In these attacks, Protestants claimed that a Catholic president would be subject to the demands of the Pope and this would inevitably encroach upon the

national sovereignty of the United States. In a speech in Houston, Jack Kennedy responded to these attacks by saying, "I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters--and the church does not speak for me." (Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, 1960) In response, Catholics rallied around Kennedy, giving him over 70% of their vote in the general election. Catholics' response, along with the vast numbers of Protestants no longer swayed by anti-Catholic religious appeals, helped Kennedy to win a close election and become the thirty-fifth president of the United States.

Forty-four years later, John Kerry sought to equal Kennedy's achievement by becoming the forty-fourth president of the United States. Beyond just their initials, John F. Kennedy and John F. Kerry shared many similarities. John Kerry was also raised as a Catholic and a member of the New England elite. John's father, Richard Kerry, was a career diplomat and a Catholic who served in various U.S. State Department posts around the world, but it was John's mother, Rosemary Forbes Kerry, and her familial connections that allowed John to grow up in the privileged social world of the Boston Brahmins. John attended and graduated from Yale University. Upon graduation, John, like Jack, entered the military and became a decorated war hero during Vietnam. On returning home, he gained national recognition as an outspoken opponent of continued involvement in Vietnam and thus began his entry into politics. In 1984, John was elected a U.S. Senator by the people of Massachusetts and again followed in Jack Kennedy's footsteps when he became the Democratic Party's nominee for president in 2004.

In the summer of 2004, John Kerry, like Kennedy before him, was attacked as a Catholic. Yet unlike Kennedy and Al Smith, who were attacked from without by Protestants, Kerry was attacked from within by other Catholics. Specifically, four conservative bishops (Bishop Michael J. Sheridan of Colorado Springs, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Denver, Archbishop Raymond L. Burke of St. Louis, and Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark) publicly attacked John Kerry for his positions regarding abortion, stem cell research, and same-sex marriage.¹ Not only did these bishops threaten to withhold communion from Kerry and other pro-choice Catholic politicians, but at various times they maintained that voting for Kerry would be a “grave sin,” an “act of complicity with evil,” or a sin of sufficient deviancy that Catholics who voted for a pro-choice politician were “ipso facto” outside of communion with the Catholic Church (Editorial 2004, Ratzinger 2004, Sheridan 2004). Various conservative Catholic political groups also mobilized and distributed voting guides to Catholics that identified abortion, gay marriage and the stem cell debate as among a handful of “non-negotiable issues” that essentially “disqualified” Catholics from voting for Kerry (e.g., Catholic Answers 2004).

Democratic Catholic politicians immediately responded to these attacks. For example, the office of Dick Durbin (Catholic Senator from Illinois) produced a “scorecard” of politicians based on the issues of importance to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This pamphlet argued that John Kerry and Catholic Democrats were closer than their Republican counterparts to the position of the Catholic

¹ A scenario similar to Kerry’s occurred in 1984 when Geraldine Ferraro was chosen as Walter Mondale’s vice-presidential running mate. However, perhaps because she was only a vice-presidential candidate at the time, the attacks seemed far fewer in number (most of them from Archbishop O’Connor of New York) and the issue did not draw as much national media attention. Nor did it involve as many definitive-sounding statements from members of the Church hierarchy.

Church on a host of issues including health care, the death penalty, welfare, immigration rights, and foreign policy (“Evaluating the Votes and Actions of Public Officials from a Catholic Perspective” 2004). Other Catholic Bishops, while noting the Catholic Church’s consistent pro-life stance towards abortion, also argued that no one political party fully incorporated Catholic views on political issues. Consequently, they suggested that Catholics continue to rely on their individual consciences in deciding how to vote. On his own behalf, John Kerry responded to these attacks by doing what Kennedy had done decades earlier. He highlighted the fact that his public role as politician would be free from any religious coercion, without denying the importance of his private Catholic faith. In fact, he even borrowed from Kennedy in arguing that if he were to become President, he would be a President who happens to be Catholic, not a Catholic President.

The result? On the one hand, Kerry appeared to win the debate with the conservative Catholic Bishops as polls cited in the New York Times indicated that almost three quarters of the Catholic population felt that the Church should not be dictating to Catholic voters or politicians. On the other hand, George W. Bush received 52 % of the Catholic vote to John Kerry’s 48% (based on exit polling), and John Kerry lost the election. In fact, despite Catholics’ historic ties to the Democratic Party, Bush won a slightly higher proportion of the vote among Catholics than among the electorate as a whole. John Green, a political scientist who studies religion and politics at the University of Akron in Ohio, argued that in the swing states of Ohio and Florida it was Catholics who provided the critical votes for Bush’s victory (Waldman and Green 2004). In these crucial states, Catholics actually voted in the general election for Bush at higher rates than Catholics nationally (something close to 58% in exit polls), and these states allowed

George Bush to gain the majority he needed in the electoral college. Thus, Catholics, who had clinched Kennedy's victory, failed to do so for Kerry and thus put their own stamp on his loss.

Obviously, there was much more to the campaign between John Kerry and George Bush in 2004 than just religion and Catholic voting, just as there was in the 1960 campaign between Kennedy and Nixon. Yet, contrasting these two campaigns illustrates a broader truth. Just as the election of Jack Kennedy in 1960 symbolically ratified the mainstreaming of American Catholics into U.S. society, so too, the campaign and electoral loss of John Kerry tells us much about the social, religious and political differences within American Catholicism today. Having entered the political mainstream, Catholics are now less likely to be attacked by Protestants and are less worried about such attacks. Yet, they are becoming ever more aware of divisions within themselves and the broader Church. No longer is a tight-knit Catholic identity constructed in response to a hostile society, the way it was prior to Kennedy's election. Instead, as Catholics have become part of mainstream America, they have been given the opportunity to re-interpret their religious selves in diverse ways. Consequently, Catholics now struggle with each other over what it means to be Catholic, and this has led to a diversification of Catholic identity. Yet, unlike the faith traditions of Protestantism (with its hundreds of different Protestant denominations situated along the religious and political spectrum) and Judaism (with its reconstructionist, reform, conservative, and orthodox branches), the Catholic Church is uniquely monolithic in its institutional structure. Most importantly, as Protestant denominations have splintered and rearranged

themselves over the past 40 years, Catholics have somehow maintained organizational unity.

In an era in which Catholics are so divided socially and politically, how do individual Catholics deal with differences and remain united as a Church community? This question is central to my dissertation. To begin to answer it, I investigate self-identified traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics via in-depth interviews and national survey data, and I consider the ways in which these religious identities both divide and unify Catholics today. Before discussing my own research, however, I briefly describe several sociological approaches to understanding contemporary religious divisions, all of which I consider in later chapters.

Sociological Accounts of Religious Division and Identity

According to many sociologists of religion, conflicts between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews that once dominated the American religious, social and political landscape have been supplanted over the past 50 years by “symbolic battles” within faith traditions between the religious left and right (Wuthnow 1988, p. 138, 1989, Wuthnow and Lawson 1994) or between progressives and the religiously orthodox (Hunter 1991). According to others (Smith, Emerson, Gallagher, Kennedy, and Sikkink 1998), beginning in the 1940s, a restructuring of Protestant identity occurred when the current “evangelical” Protestant identity emerged and began to play an increasingly important role in U.S. religious and political life. This identity reached across denominational boundaries by drawing upon divisions within denominations and focusing its attention on evangelizing the broader society. Finally, according to sociologists of American Catholicism (D’Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Meyer 2001), Catholic identity has been

changing over the past two decades, largely as a result of changes in the Catholic Church introduced following the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. According to these researchers, the emerging Catholic identity is less committed to Church authority and the institutional Church, but no less committed to the Catholic faith.

Whether considering divisions within denominations or identities that cross denominational boundaries, research on religion in the U.S. over the past two decades has produced a substantial body of work focused on explaining religious divisions that cannot be explained by differences in denomination or faith tradition. As a result, these theories suggest new ways to conceive of the religious divide and provide sociologists with new tools for understanding and explaining religious differentiation. I briefly outline three such theories along with recent sociological work examining Catholic identity

The Restructuring of American Religion

In a series of books and articles, Robert Wuthnow (1988, 1989, Wuthnow and Lawson 1994) sought to provide a social history of religious conflict in the U.S. over the past 50 years in order to both highlight and explain why conflict within denominations is now more important than conflict between them. He argued that, in the period after WWII, several factors have come together to redraw the symbolic boundaries of U.S. religion.

He began by noting the general uncertainties about moral commitments and the moral order that arose in the 1960s. With the introduction of the large “baby boom” population and the massive expansion of U.S. higher education, an enormous number of young people developed personal expectations, beliefs and lifestyles quite different from those of their parents. As these college students lost ties to their communities of origin,

they entered an arena of increased experimentation in ethics and lifestyles. With the emergence of counter-cultural rallying cries (e.g., sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll), and especially with new norms and mores regarding sexuality in an age of widely-available contraception, college-educated baby boomers developed cultural and religious sensibilities in a much different milieu than their less-educated counterparts.

This divide was reinforced by the heightened political activity and controversy of the 1960s. Controversies concerning civil rights protests and protests against the Vietnam War often involved college students rebelling against the social order and questioning the moral commitments of their parents, government, and church. Uncertainties over the moral order in America escalated as the role of government in everyday life expanded. The federal government's intervention into such family and cultural issues as abortion, school prayer, birth control, sexuality, corporal punishment, and pornography signaled the loss of a shared civic religion in America and politicized religion, as religious traditionalists increasingly came to see government as antagonistic to their religious values.

According to Wuthnow (1988), the largely government-funded expansion of education since the Second World War led to rising levels of higher education and widening education gaps within the major faith traditions of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism such that faith traditions came to be divided along educational lines into conservative and liberal religious camps. Discussing how these social divisions became institutionalized, Wuthnow (1989) noted the emergence over the past few decades of religious organizations that are non-denominational in nature, which he termed "special purpose groups," and he highlighted the importance of such groups in routinizing intra-

denominational conflict and linking it to U.S. politics. He further suggested that traditional Catholics, conservative Protestants, and orthodox Jews may now have more in common with each other than each do with theological liberals in their own faith traditions. Consequently, he argued that moral-political divisions within faiths are more important than divisions rooted in denomination or faith tradition for understanding Americans' differing religious and political outlooks.

Culture Wars

James Davison Hunter began his research into religion with an exploration of Evangelicals, employing Peter Berger's (1969) concept of religion as a "sacred canopy." A social constructionist, Berger theorized that religious belief requires communal support in order to maintain the plausibility of the supernatural. As such, "sacred canopy" referred to the society-wide communal meaning system necessary to protect individual religious belief. His theory suggested that secularization was a natural consequence of modernity. As modernity eroded community, it also eroded the necessary elements for continued religious belief.

Hunter (1983) appropriated this theoretical apparatus to explore Evangelicals. Upon first glance, Evangelicals were an exception to Berger's theory insofar as Evangelicals continued to maintain high levels of religious belief. Hunter argued, however, that Evangelicals actually supported Berger's theory, because they were essentially "anti-modern." Hunter argued that Evangelicals were more rural, less educated and less economically advantaged than their more liberal religious counterparts and it was this lack of contact with "modernization" that allowed them to maintain their religious culture in the face of creeping modernity. In speaking with Evangelicals,

Hunter found that Evangelicals were not only status-deprived, but they also felt that their orthodox belief system was constantly under attack by the forces of modernity.

In developing his “culture war” thesis, Hunter (1991), like Wuthnow, argued that religious divisions now transcend denomination and faith tradition. In so doing, he argued that Evangelicals’ view of their religious beliefs as “under attack” could be applied across religions, and he identified two opposing forces within contemporary religious society, religious progressives and the religiously orthodox. The divide between the two was based upon opposing moral cosmologies. On the one hand, religious progressives viewed individuals as the ultimate moral arbiters of right and wrong and thus regarded religious texts and teachings as human creations that should be given no special weight as individuals make moral decisions. The religiously orthodox, on the other hand, viewed God as the arbiter of good and evil and regarded sacred texts (and church teachings derived from these) as the word of God and hence inerrant and timeless.

Hunter argued that these basic disagreements over the locus of moral authority are the cause of ongoing conflicts over political issues such as abortion, sexuality, and school prayer. Since divisions between religious progressives and the religiously orthodox are a result of competing moral worldviews that are intrinsically and ultimately opposed to each other, Hunter argued that, while 61% of Americans are in the middle, there is really no common ground upon which these opponents can settle their disagreements. As a result, he suggested that all religious traditionalists, with their common moral viewpoint, were now engaged in a culture war with religious progressives and this cultural war threatened to turn into a physical one.

Sub-Cultural Identity Theory

Christian Smith (Smith et al. 1998) suggested that his sub-cultural identity theory could be seen as an elaboration of the theory of “religious economies” developed by Finke, Stark, and Iannaccone, but it can also be read as a critique of Hunter’s (1983) earlier study of Evangelicals as well. Economistic theories of religion (Finke and Stark 1988, 1989, 1992, Iannaccone 1991, Stark and Bainbridge 1985, 1987, Stark and Iannaccone 1994) argue that religious denominations and religious entrepreneurs “market” and “sell” religious wares within a religious economy. Much of the initial research in this area has focused on “market regulation” and its effects on the development of religious economies. This research has argued that in less-regulated, pluralistic societies, where religious entrepreneurs are free to produce and market their products as they wish, religious affiliation and participation grow over time because religious organizations and elites compete with each other and develop religious products that fulfill people’s religious needs and fit various religious niches. This research has directly challenged Berger’s secularization theory (and Hunter’s work in the process) by arguing that modern pluralism, far from eroding religious belief over time, is a spur to its growth.

Rather than focusing solely on denominations, however, Smith suggested that religious identities are created by religious entrepreneurs and religious movements (introducing social movement theory into religious theory and research in the process). Smith argued that the Protestant identities of “Evangelical,” “Fundamentalist,” “Mainline,” and “Liberal” have been created by religious movements, which have carved out “identity-spaces” and created sub-cultural communities that support these identities. In his book on Evangelicalism, Smith specifically pointed to the importance of the

National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in fashioning an “Evangelical” identity.

With its emergence in 1942, Smith argued that the NAE developed as an umbrella group for Evangelical religious actors and helped to create and develop the modern religious identity of Evangelical Protestantism over the next decade and a half. He writes,

“By the mid-1950s, at the latest, it was clear that the emergence of modern evangelicalism had affected a restructuring in the field of American religious identity.” (Smith et al. 1998, p14.)

Smith, unlike Hunter, did not identify Evangelicals based on their membership in particular denominations but instead defined them by their religious self-identification as an “Evangelical” Protestant.

Finally, instead of focusing on religious elites like most “religious market” researchers, Smith suggested that sociologists should investigate the religious understandings of ordinary churchgoers. In his own research on Protestant identity, Smith argued that Evangelical identity should be understood as “engaged orthodoxy.” Thus, Evangelicals stressed their religious orthodoxy in comparison to Liberal Protestants, but also called for conservative Protestants to engage and “evangelize” the sinful world in contrast to Fundamentalists’ disengagement from society. Smith argued that it is because Evangelicals seek to engage a society they consider sinful and in need of conversion that they view themselves as embattled. So contrary to Hunter, Smith argued that Evangelicals’ sense of being “under attack” is an integral element of their religious identity. Engagement with modernity and modern society, far from leading to religious decline, actually intensifies Evangelical religious identity and religious vitality. Nor is this identity a result of status-deprivation. Smith found that self-identified Evangelicals, while still being the most religious of individuals, were not less educated, less well-paid,

or more rural than other Americans. According to Smith, modern pluralism, instead of eroding religious belief, has created an environment in which competing religious identities are not only acceptable, but can be a spur to greater religiosity.

Generation and Catholic Identity

D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Mayer (2001) in their book, American Catholics: Gender, Generation, and Commitment, sought to provide an authoritative study of American Catholics using national survey data collected in 1987, 1993, and 1999, along with data from other studies that one or more of them had conducted. After describing major changes in the Catholic Church and its relationship to American society over the past century, they suggested that these changes had created internal differentiation among Catholics in the U.S. In particular they spoke of changes in the institutional Church after Vatican II and upward mobility of Catholics themselves as they shifted from immigrant outsiders to mainstream Americans. Their study sought to chart changes in American Catholics' behavior and identity as they have adapted to changes in their Church, in their society, and in the relationship between the two.

In a chapter entitled "The New Catholic identity," D'Antonio et al. (2001) investigated contemporary Catholics' rapidly changing self-concept and studied the importance of subjective boundaries between Catholics and others. For instance, they explored which beliefs and behaviors are viewed as essential to being a "good Catholic." While they found that highly-committed Catholics are stricter in defining "good Catholics" than less-committed Catholics, they discovered that strictness among all Catholics has generally declined from 1987 to 1999. In examining boundaries with other religions, they also asked whether Catholics agreed with such statements as "Catholicism

contains a greater share of truth than other religions do” or “the Catholic Church is the one true Church,” and in considering the key elements of being Catholic, they differentiated between core and periphery, with elements most Catholics considered essential described as “core” and elements that most considered optional described as “periphery.” Unfortunately, they did not consider whether there may be multiple Catholic identities that exist in competition with each other today, rather than a single “new Catholic identity.” As such, they did not explore the symbolic boundaries “within” Catholicism.

Even so, D’Antonio et al. (2001) noted several generational differences in how Catholics conceive of themselves and the Church. First, they suggested that young Catholics were less rigid in their boundaries between Catholics and non-Catholics in being less likely to believe that Catholicism “contains a greater share of truth” or that it is “the one true Church.” Second, they found that young people pay much less attention to adherence to Catholic teachings regarding birth control and abortion than do their elders. This was true in their evaluation of what it takes to be a “good Catholic” but also in their identification of what were the most important aspects for them, personally, of Catholicism. Thus, “young Catholics have a vision of Catholicism that includes less church authority and less rigid boundaries than is the case with older Catholics.” Finally, they conclude,

“In their Catholic identity, laypeople today distinguish between having Catholic *faith*, and being committed to the institutional *Church*. Some Catholics are committed to both; others to faith only.” (2001, p. 50, emphasis in the original)

The Present Study

I explore the religious identities of self-identified traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics via a multi-method study. First, I conducted 50 two-hour long in-depth interviews with Catholics from three different parishes in three different Midwestern cities. These parishes were chosen to reflect the diversity of Catholic religious expression in the U.S. As I discuss in more detail below, each of the three parishes differed in terms of which religious identity was most likely to be chosen. (Consequently, I labeled one a traditional parish, another a moderate parish, and the third a liberal parish based on which identification was most likely to be chosen by the parishioners of each parish). To obtain these interviews, I sent letters to 100 parishioners randomly sampled from all Catholics registered at each of the three parishes. I received between 25 and 30 responses to this letter at each parish, and chose to interview a total of 50 respondents from the 80 or so responses I received. As a consequence of my sampling method, my interviewees are especially likely to be highly committed and connected Catholics, since they have taken the time to both register as parishioners and to reply to my letter requesting volunteers to be interviewed. To better consider all Catholics (both highly committed and those who are more disaffected), I also conducted analyses on national survey data gathered under the auspices of the General Social Survey by the National Opinion Research Center. In 1998 and 2000, 984 Catholics were asked to identify themselves as traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholics and I use these responses to explore Catholic religious divisions nationally, noting that respondents of this national survey include both registered and unregistered Catholics (thus not biasing representation by only surveying highly committed Catholics).

Below, I introduce a traditional Catholic and her traditional parish, a liberal Catholic and her liberal parish, and a moderate Catholic and his moderate parish. In introducing these individuals, I provide a snapshot of American Catholics' diversity and a sense of my in-depth interviews with Catholics. I also use these individuals to highlight questions and issues that I deal with in later chapters.

Grace, a Traditional Catholic

"I'm a good Catholic. I think, nowadays, the younger generation don't think too much of it if they miss Mass on Sunday. I know some of my grandkids are like that. And I wouldn't miss Mass if it was a matter of life or death. I mean today, a lot of people don't believe in Hell, they say that God loves you too much. And I remember they used to tell us when we were little, 'You'll go to Hell if you do that. You'll go straight to Hell.' And they always talked like that."

I meet Grace, an 82 year-old widow who self-identifies as a traditional Catholic, for our interview on a weekday morning at her home—a charming bungalow less than a block from St. Alphonsus Parish. When she opens the door, I immediately notice her bright blue eyes and curly white hair. Born and raised in a parish on just the other side of town, she has been a member of her current parish for the past 40 years and a resident of the same city all her life. She chose to be a stay-at-home mom while her children were young, but later worked at several retail stores, and is now retired.

Grace would be categorized as orthodox in Hunter's schema of moral cosmology. True to this categorization, with its focus on God's law as the source of moral authority, she suggests the following criteria to identify traditional Catholics. "Do you observe all the laws of the church and don't ever, ever do anything different? Were you raised up to do that? Did your mother and father do that? That's what I would ask." Yet, far from feeling attacked or at war with her progressive counterparts, she thinks the differences

between traditional and liberal Catholics are healthy for the Church. When I ask her why she thinks they are healthy, she explains,

“Because you learn how to treat other people and you know that not everybody can be traditional, not everybody was raised up that way in a traditional church. My grandfather sold the ground to [a nearby parish] and that’s all you heard was Catholic this, Catholic that, you wouldn’t even think of anything else, but if somebody else didn’t think like that, if they were liberal, I sure wouldn’t care. I wouldn’t care what they did. It wouldn’t hurt me any.”

Another ironic thing about Grace is that in obeying the rules of the Church she is sometimes forced to accept a less traditional version of liturgical practice than she prefers, and at the same time she still finds some things that she wishes the Church would be less strict on. For example, Grace expresses her fondness for the Latin Mass. She says that she misses it because it was so beautiful, although she recognizes that having Mass in English allowed more people to understand it. She also comments that, after Vatican II, the communion rails were removed and lay people were allowed to hand out communion, but she still wishes the priest was the only one who handled the Eucharist. When I ask her if the way the Church has changed since Vatican II is a good thing or a bad thing, though, she says,

“I guess it’s a good thing because people a lot smarter than me changed it, but I liked the old way better. We were so...when we saw the priest, we wouldn’t even touch his clothes. We thought he was almost like God himself. But now kids call them by their first names, and it’s not as holy as it used to be. And there’s no nuns hardly, and the nuns were the same way. I used to think they were angels almost, they were so sweet and now they all... a lot of them left. A lot of the priests left. So I think the old way, when they were really religious, was the best way.”

She balanced this out a bit by saying,

“Of course they [the priests and religious] do more things out in the world than they did before, so there’s two sides to every story. They’re more free now. They can go on vacations, go places, go home to their families. Before, if their parents died, they couldn’t even go to see them. But I think that part of it’s better now.

But some changes are better and some aren't better. For all the good ones, there's a couple that you'd rather see it be like it was."

Overall, though, she says she feels like the changes were about right because everything is more liberal now, and she realizes that priests and nuns are human beings. In saying this, Grace acknowledges her belief that the church was a bit too strict before Vatican II, but she suggests at several points that the Church is now too liberal.

Even so, Grace mentions a couple of ways in which she feels the Church is still too strict and could change for the better. While she makes sure to go to confession at least once a year, Grace mentions her own desire for confession to become optional because, "I think I can tell God in my heart that I am sorry." She also notes that doing confession puts an unnecessary burden on many elderly individuals:

"When you're past a certain age, what can you do? All you do is go to bed and be with your kids and friends and you don't have any great big sins. One year we had to wait in line about 45 minutes around Easter time and I thought I was going to have to hold onto the wall [or faint]."

Grace also thinks the church should ease some of its strictures regarding divorce, especially when this is not the person's fault.

"I got a granddaughter and she was married and he turned Catholic and everything for her, and they weren't married a year and he met somebody else. Just came home and said, 'I'm gonna get a divorce.' Well she couldn't do anything about it, I mean he was gonna get a divorce, but now she's trying to get hers annulled. I don't know how far along she is in it, but she's been working on it for a long time. I think eventually it will happen she can get a, what do you call it...an annulment. But they have to go through so much to get it, and it really wasn't her fault at all. I think they oughta lighten up on that."

Clearly Grace's sense of self does not fit neatly into Hunter's strict divide between the religiously orthodox and religious progressives, nor would notions of a religious war fit into her mindset.

Providing some support for Wuthnow's argument regarding educational divisions and religious traditionalism, Grace never went to college, but she did attend Catholic grade school and high school, receiving her high school diploma in 1938. Similarly, Wuthnow might place Grace as a member of the religious right, but she considers herself moderate in her political views and identifies herself as an Independent (although she admits to leaning Republican). Still, she certainly likes President Bush.

"Now Bush isn't Catholic but he's a very religious man. He mentions God's name all the time and he's got a wonderful wife. Now when Clinton was in, I wouldn't vote for him, I think I'd give up my life before I'd vote for him. I thought he was a crook. Treating his wife like he did and all."

She also mentions the importance of abortion as a political issue and highlights her own pro-life stance. In fact, Clinton's vetoing of the partial birth abortion act especially upset her, but she recognizes that she is a bit unique among her friends in her dislike of Clinton.

"Abortion, he [Clinton] was for abortion, yeah, and he was going to vote for that so that it would be legal and all that, and I thought he was awful. And I tried to convince them of that because those that were Democrat, there's some Irish Democrats around here that no matter what they did they wouldn't vote anyway but Democrat ...some of them around here are so Democrat that they wouldn't even read anything about anything else or anything bad about a Democrat because their mother was Democrat and their ancestors all voted Democrat all their lives."

Later, Grace again emphasizes the Democratic tendencies of many traditional Catholics,

"Now, I don't think they [priests] are allowed to talk about politics but there are some certain politics here in town, because they're so liberal, which are the Democrats, very liberal, most of the priests and the nuns in my time always went for that. I don't know if it's cuz the poor get more or what."

Contrary to a simplistic view of Grace as a member of the religious right, though, her pro-life position did not always follow a conservative political agenda. When I ask her about the death penalty, she says,

"Personally, I think they should just keep them in prison that would be a bigger punishment than ending their life. I don't think anybody's got a right to end

another person's life ever under any circumstances. I don't know if it's my faith or just my opinion that you're not supposed to take anybody's life. I don't believe in the electric chair or anything like that no. I think they give them shots nowadays, but no I don't think they should kill people."

Also contrary to Wuthnow's notion that because religious differences between groups are less important, individuals are developing personal interconnections across denomination and tradition, Grace is not connected with traditionalists of other religions (beyond her willingness to vote for Bush as a religious individual). When I ask Grace a question about traditionalist Protestants, she responds, "I don't even know any traditional Protestants." In answering another question, she again highlights her lack of interaction with Protestants (at least religiously) and knowledge of Protestants saying,

"Well at the consecration, when the priest consecrates the host and turns the bread and wine into our Lord's body and blood, I think that's the most beautiful part. And I don't think other churches have that...or maybe they do. I really have never been in a Protestant church. Not that I wouldn't go, you know, I just didn't have any occasion to. I had so much going on over here all the time."

Partly due to this lack of interaction with Protestants and partly due to the fact that Grace sees the Mass as connecting all Catholics, she told me that she identifies much more closely with liberal Catholics than with traditionalist Protestants.

Perhaps as a result, in explaining what makes her feel most proud to be Catholic, she speaks of the unity of Catholics in the Mass:

"This sounds silly but...I'm just proud to be a Catholic. When I see everybody in church...One time we went to Florida, it was the biggest church I ever saw and everybody was saying the same prayers no matter what state you were from. It was beautiful."

In speaking of her pride as a Catholic, she becomes quite emotional, with her voice getting shaky, and her eyes tearing up.

D'Antonio et al. focus attention on generational divisions within Catholicism, and Grace sees these as well,

“I think the whole church itself is more liberal now. And I think that generation became more liberal because of that.”

She connects these differences to “changes in the Church” and the “times of the day.” In particular, she mentions that priests are much different today than in her youth, especially in their treatment of wrongdoers and their pastoral approach toward sinful acts.

“Our priests are more modern than they used to be...I've never had an abortion and I don't know anybody that has had an abortion...but I imagine they'd be much kinder with her or nobody would ever tell them...they were so strict [back then] that you wouldn't dare tell them anything like that.”

Yet, she notes that these generational trends are not monolithic. She and her husband raised 4 daughters, prior to his death 24 years earlier. She explains that while some of her children and grandchildren are more liberal now, others are still traditional.

“I got one daughter that is so religious...all her life she worked for pro-life and still does. She and her husband do everything for pro-life. They preach it at home, they don't preach it, but they instill it in their kids, and their kids are just like her...they're real excellent. But they're not liberal...they would never miss Mass, they'd never use birth control and they'd never do all the bad things, you know. Look at another woman or man..they're staunch Catholics.”

Grace's Traditional Parish

Grace views St. Alphonsus as a traditional parish, and in my interviews I found that, in fact, the predominant identity of the parishioners that I interviewed there is traditional Catholic (see Table 1.1).

Grace, however, mentions other parishes in town as being even more traditional:

“Traditional, I would say St. M's but it's not like when that priest, what's his name, he had all the Spanish people in the world came over to St. M's at that time. That was real traditional. I think St P's was traditional, they were all German people and they...when that neighborhood got bad they all moved out,

which is normal, but as far as the parish was concerned I think it was. I think St. J's still has Latin Mass, I'd say that's a traditional parish."

Interestingly, Grace highlights the ethnicity of these parishes when mentioning them.

Less surprising, perhaps, is her mention of the celebration of Mass in Latin as identifying a parish as traditional.

TABLE 1.1: CATHOLIC IDENTIFICATION AT ST. ALPHONSUS PARISH

When it comes to your religious identity, would you say you are a traditional, moderate, or liberal catholic or do none of these describe you?

	St. Alphonsus	
	Number:	Percentage:
Traditional	8	47%
Moderate	5	29%
Liberal	3	18%
None of the Above	1	6%
Total	17	100%

In speaking of St. Alphonsus and its ethnic make-up, Grace mentions that there are a lot of Irish parishioners, and points out that the pastor even named a hall after St Patrick (which she personally could have done without.)

"Of course there are a lot of Irish in this parish and Fr. even donated one of the halls to...calls it St. Patrick's room and the other room he calls St...another Irish name, he tries to...he knows there's a lot of Irish and I think that's nice but...(shrugs her shoulders indicating that she doesn't entirely approve).

Brian: Are you Irish?

"No (laughter).. I'm from St. P's (her original parish). German."

Brian: Ok (while smiling)

"That might have something to do with it. (she agrees with a smile)"

When I ask if Grace still thinks of St. Alphonsus as an Irish parish, she says,

“The ones that I would say were more affluent left the parish. That’s why there are so many empty houses around here—not because of the parish, but because the neighborhood was getting so bad.”

Speaking of the neighborhood, she takes the time to mention that some black people have moved in, noting at the same time that she has not felt unsafe, but mainly because she lives close to the parish. She goes on to say,

“But there’s still old Irish people that are still in the parish. The ones that were mediocre, they weren’t rich, they weren’t real poor, they’re all still here. A lot of them are here. And like I say, they all like Fr. Doug so bad. A lot of them moved out and came back just to hear him.”

In explaining how she and her husband ended up in St. Alphonsus years ago, she says,

“Well, my husband was from St. C’s and that was inner city, that’s a worse neighborhood than St. P’s (her old parish), and when we moved out here everybody he knew, he belonged to every choir no matter where he was, he was a real good singer and he loved to sing in church...well everybody who knew him was moving out here. And we lived in St. P’s Parish at that time because my dad owned a double across the street from their house and he gave us a year’s rent for a wedding present. So we moved in there for a year, and it ended up about 5 years and Tom (her husband) had to go to the service and I had 2 kids so I stayed there. And then when he got out of the service we started saving our money and looking for a place. Well, everyplace was real high priced...too much for us ‘cause we didn’t have any savings and he worked at International Harvester. So, he went back to Harvester and got a job and we kinda started anew, and we ended up buying that house down the street here.

When I ask about her initial impression of Little Flower, years and years ago, she replies,

“The altar wasn’t where it is now, and I thought it was very nice, yes. It was a well...big population, lots of school kids everybody liked St. Al’s, it was really good. We loved it, yeah. From the very beginning. Course, Tom never lived to see these rentals and all this stuff. I don’t know what he’d have thought. He’d have probably wanted to move out.

When I ask if she investigated any other churches after they moved, she says, “No.” She also mentions that parish boundaries were stricter then, and they chose the house in large part based on the parish, so any investigation was prior to the move. Still, she says she

would not have considered going to another church besides St. Al's, and now that her daughter does not drive, this parish is close to both of them so she will not look anywhere else. Demographically, her parish, like many other traditional Catholic parishes, is changing. While the grade school is still going strong, the parish has been getting older with an increasing proportion of elderly parishioners. Overall, however, St. Al's is still a vibrant parish and retains a blue-collar, working class feel to itself. In the end, Grace is rather typical of the traditional Catholics I interviewed, and she loves her Church and her parish with a joy and tenderness that is palpable.

Katie, a Liberal Catholic

"I'm a disgruntled Catholic. One might label me, much to my dismay, a liberal Catholic. I would say a Progressive Catholic perhaps. I guess I would call myself a liberal Catholic because I think all the things that the Pope doesn't. I am just kidding, but I think that women should be priests, I do. I am hurt by it. I know a lot of women that would make great priests. I generally think that it should be an option for priests to be married in light of the priest shortage. I also have a lot of friends that are gay and I think that some of the church teachings towards gay people are really hurtful. I also think that the contraception issue doesn't match reality. What is it, like 93 to 97 percent of Catholics use contraceptives? So, obviously something is wrong if that many Catholics aren't following church teachings."

I arrive at Katie's home on a weekday evening in June. She is a 25-year old Catholic with short blond hair and a quick smile. Katie and her husband live in an older home with a large front porch. Since it is rather hot and they do not have air conditioning, she suggests we conduct the interview out on the porch and apologizes for the current (cluttered) state of her home. She explains that she and her husband are getting ready to move as a result of his acceptance into a Ph.D. program in another state. Katie was born and raised in a large Midwestern city some distance away, but has been here for several years now. Though excited about their upcoming move, she is also sad

to be leaving the city, with its many memories and friends she has made while here. Luckily, she and her husband expect the move to go smoothly since they have no children, “just a cat.” She tells me that she just finished her second year of teaching at an inner-city public school and is excited to say that she already has a job lined up for next fall teaching Catholic fourth graders in their new city.

Katie would be categorized as a religious progressive in Hunter’s schema of moral cosmology, and she identifies herself as such. While she is not opposed to tradition, she denies the Church a simple, uncomplicated, and unified past. When I ask her if the Church should remain true to the past, she responds,

“True to the past... I don’t know what that means. There are too many words there that are too fuzzy, like ‘true’ and ‘past.’ I mean what should it be true to? The 1920’s? The Spanish Inquisition? Should it be true to the original disciples? What are you talking about there? Because the Church changes so much that I don’t know what it should be true to. I think if we were really smart, we’d be true to Jesus and preach the gospel, rather than just focus on the “Church” in quotations.”

She certainly sees a need for progress in the Church and highlights many ways in which she is embarrassed by the Church at times. For instance, when I ask her what makes her feel not so proud about being Catholic, she replies cynically, “Wow. This can only be an hour?” She goes on to say, “Well, obviously the priest abuse scandal is just embarrassing.” Another problem for her is that women still cannot be priests, although she says,

“I see the reasons for it and the Church takes a while, like a hundred years, to change, so it’s understandable, but kind of embarrassing being an American and being pro-woman.”

She also mentions being embarrassed by paternalistic pronouncements regarding whether pro-choice politicians and their voters can receive communion. “I just find it kind of

embarrassing that it's getting so-it's like the big dad coming down on the kids or something." The Church's prickliness regarding communion affects her in other ways, too.

"Our friend Ryan, who we went to mass with the other night, is Episcopalian-he's like a minister. He has his master's in divinity and knows a lot about Catholicism, and he always makes comments about how he can't go to (Catholic) communion. I understand the reasons why we can't do that as well, but sometimes it's just like without giving someone a huge background in history of theology of why we do the things we do, it's that initial response and people's misjudgment and misunderstanding about Catholicism [that] is sometimes embarrassing."

At the same time, while she is disgruntled with and embarrassed by the institutional Church, she also notes how, just like a family, Catholics struggle and have disagreements but stay united.

"[It's] like we'll mumble something about the Pope and this or that or we'll just throw our hands up and say, 'well, we'll have to muddle through this somehow.' It's a struggle-a unified struggle."

She also recognizes that Catholics who disagree with her are doing the same thing.

"Even on the other side of the pendulum, the people swinging the other way are struggling about antiwar stuff and things that I'm intolerant about."

She never speaks of them as opponents, much less enemies. It also becomes clear why she talks about these differences as similar to that of a family, when I ask her who she imagines when she thinks of traditional Catholics, she says,

"I think about my family-all of my uncles and aunts are really traditional Catholics. They're white; they're middle-class; they're comfortable in their lifestyles; they go to church every Sunday; they send their kids to Catholic schools; they're very set in their ways and they get frustrated when you rattle."

As a result, Katie, like Grace, sees differences between traditional and liberal Catholics as generally healthy, as long as people continue to listen to each other. Rather than a culture war, she describes the divide as a conversation.

“I think it’s a healthy thing; I think that the conversation is good and I think that the differing opinions are good. I think that is a sign of a healthy church. If you have people who are dissenting, it means that you have a Church that is thinking. I think I would be more scared if it was complacent right now. I think that it’s good, but I think that it’s getting so divisive that I think too much can be destructive definitely. I think it can be destructive when you don’t listen to the people who are dissenting.

While Katie sees no war in the future, she does have some fears that divisions will become wider and deeper if people stop listening to each other, and she mentions some examples of people who may have left the Church because of this,

“I’m disgruntled, but I don’t feel like I’m anywhere near leaving the Church, whereas I know a lot of people who are really on the fringe and really think some things that I don’t think that extreme on with the Church. They maybe have a lot more anger towards the Church than I do. I get angry, but I kind of think of the Church like a person. It’s the body of Christ that’s broken, and I don’t think it’s going to be perfect; there is going to be a lot of brokenness to it.”

Supporting Wuthnow’s emphasis on liberals as highly educated, Katie has received a Masters degree in education. Though Katie might be categorized a member of the religious left by Wuthnow, she finds it difficult to place herself in terms of political ideology. When I ask where she falls on a scale from extremely conservative to extremely liberal, she declares,

“I don’t like the words liberal or conservative, I don’t think it’s very helpful to categorize things. I don’t know what to say, because I’m still Catholic, so automatically you can’t be a screaming liberal. So I would say—I guess a three, maybe two. You know, Republicans think I’m crazy. My anarchist friends think I’m quite conservative.”

In terms of party, she identifies as “an Independent,” but notes that she leans Democrat.

While she clearly dislikes Bush after his push for the war in Iraq, she is also disenchanted by many Democrats. On the war in Iraq, she sees the Democrats as too accommodating of warmongers in failing to stake out a clear anti-war position. On the

other hand, she believes that there is a diversity of views among liberal Catholics on the abortion issue (at least at a moral level). She explains,

“I think you would find some difference in the liberals. I think you would find that some people are pro-choice Catholics and then you would find Catholics who are kind of like me (being anti-violence and pro-life, she is against the death penalty, abortion, and also pre-emptive war), who think of an entire issue where they don’t want to put themselves in a public place because it’s too divisive.”

The abortion issue, though, is not the first thing on Katie’s political agenda, and she definitely does not want to demonize women for their choices. In explaining how her views are connected to her faith, she says,

“I guess my faith tells me that whatever is given to you can be handled through the grace of God. So, that’s part of it. That’s easy to say as a white middle-class American, though. My faith tells me that you can’t judge people by the choices they make even whether they’re a prostitute or whether they have a disease such as leprosy. You’re not supposed to preach to them or proselytize them but you’re supposed to be a caring figure to them.”

As a result, Katie has learned to understand why someone would make this choice, even though she would not.

“I have just really been well-educated in how hard raising kids can be and how difficult it is to be a single mother and all of the elements that go into that. And just the difficulty of being a woman, and also while I was getting a Catholic education how not welcoming pregnant teenagers are...how they were basically kicked out of school and how hard that is. So, yeah I think I understand why someone would have an abortion now better than I did when I was a kid.”

While Katie does not match up as well on the political issues, she fits Wuthnow’s argument regarding cross-faith ties between like-minded religionists better than does Grace. When I ask her if she feels more in common in some ways with liberal Protestants than with traditional Catholics, she replies,

“I feel like sometimes I have more in common with Buddhists than I do with traditional Catholics, certainly. I think your political ideology is fundamental to your personhood and who you associate with. So yeah, but I don’t know what’s more important. Is it your political ideology or your religion? I don’t know.”

Yet, when I ask who she has more in common with overall, she finds it difficult to answer:

“More in common with? That’s so hard. My first instinct would be to say a liberal Protestant, but that’s a difficult question. I think I would enjoy being around a liberal Protestant, but I probably have more in common with the traditional Catholic than I would at first think to admit.”

While she chooses like-minded Protestants in the end, it is clear that she still feels connected to traditional Catholics. When I ask her how important the differences between traditionals and liberals are to her, she replies,

“I guess I would hate to think that the differences were more important than what is similar to us, so I guess no more important than what brings us together. I think they are important because I feel like the political atmosphere in our country right now is really polarized, and I feel like the Church is entering into that where it’s getting really polarized. I feel like the Church is setting up these stances and making statements that are really divisive, and I think that sometimes we focus too much on things that are divisive rather than the things that bring us together.”

There is much that brings Catholics together, and Katie clearly values the Church. She likes the emphasis on Easter as “being the most important Catholic holiday—not Christmas and not the week leading up to Easter, but the resurrection. I think that that’s really important.” She feels the focus should not be on the issue of suffering, but on Jesus’ redemption through the resurrection. She also mentions the Eucharist and communion as an especially important symbol—“The idea that we’re one body and we can’t divide it; we’ve got to work together. It’s the idea that, especially when talking about the world church and the body of Christ being all across the world, that’s probably one of the big reasons why I’m still Catholic,” because the Body of Christ creates “so many connections with different cultures all around the world.” Katie also mentions the importance of the ritual of the mass.

“I really like the ceremony. I like that we bring our ‘Lord, although I’m not worthy to receive you...’ I just like the idea of bringing our faults and weaknesses to a table and watching them be transformed through the body of Christ. That’s the idea with the resurrection as well, that things can be transformed, and we have all these symbols of giving over our life to God, and then our weaknesses are transformed. I think that’s a really beautiful and hope-filled thing.”

In addition to the mass, Katie was enamored of the symbolism (and physicality) of Catholicism.

“The symbols in the Catholic Church are really cool. That’s really important to me—the symbols and the participation of the clergy. The symbol of the baptismal font—I love baptism. I want to be baptized again. Just the whole experience—I think it’s so cool when people get baptized—the holy water and spraying it on the crowd. I like the sign of the cross. You can look at people and they do the sign of the cross and you know they’re Catholic. I like seeing crucifixes in people’s bedrooms”

While all the ideas above would fit with D’Antonio et al.’s notion of core and periphery, with liberal Catholics valuing the core, but disagreeing with the Church on the peripheral issues of sexuality, it challenges a bit the statement that liberal Catholics are less committed to the institutional Church. Katie clearly speaks of still being committed to the Church (not just her faith), even if she is not committed to obeying, or even agreeing with, all of the Church’s rules. In speaking about what makes her feel most proud to be Catholic, she states,

“Probably having a faith tradition that essentially reaches back to the time of Christ. Just having that rootedness makes me feel proud to be [a part] of something that requires so much commitment—even though it’s hard to be a part of an organized religion sometimes; I think it would be easier to be a free-spirited, non-denominational Christian, because you don’t have to associate yourself with such a huge corporation, you know? So with such a huge identity and reputation, it makes me feel proud to have the determination and discipline to be a part of that.”

Of course, Katie's comments suggest that it may be especially difficult for liberal Catholics to stay committed. Likely some liberal Catholics are not able to maintain her level of "determination and discipline," but she was typical of those I interviewed.

Katie's Liberal Parish

Katie considers St. John's a liberal parish, but she dislikes labeling it as such. She says,

"I hate those terms. I hate it because I think that it separates people. I think it is like, ok well now you are conservative so I can throw you in this pile and I don't have to think about what you have to say. Or now you are a liberal so I'm going to throw you in this category and I don't have to think about what you have to say."

She also names at least one other parish that is also a bit liberal:

St. R's, is a little bit liberal. I think it was Pentecost maybe that we went, and they had people speak in all different kinds of languages up there, and I think it is one of the gay friendly parishes in town, and I know St. John's is definitely gay friendly. So that would put them on the liberal side.

In the end, though, she identifies St. John's as even more liberal than St. R's, and 64% of the parishioners that I interviewed at St. John's Parish identify themselves as liberal Catholics (see Table 1.2).

TABLE 1.2: CATHOLIC IDENTIFICATION AT ST. JOHN'S PARISH

When it comes to your religious identity, would you say you are a traditional, moderate, or liberal catholic or do none of these describe you?

	St. John's Parish	
	Number:	Percentage:
Traditional	1	7%
Moderate	4	29%
Liberal	9	64%
None of the Above	-	-
Total	14	100%

Katie also knew of a few traditional parishes in the city, although she had never been to any of them herself:

“I haven’t been to any of them, but I know that there is one near here that is in Latin and I’ve been interested in going to it. I know that a lot of my husband’s students go to more suburban parishes, which tend to be more conservative or traditional.”

Thus, Katie, like Grace, mentions Latin Mass as distinctive of a traditional parish.

Interestingly, she suggests that suburban parishes are more conservative and traditional though, instead of mentioning ethnicity. I later learned that St. John’s also used to be an Irish-ethnic parish in an Irish neighborhood, but the neighborhood is now largely African-American, with little connection to its Irish roots in either the parish or neighborhood. The parish is also located next to a University, to which it maintains an institutional connection, and this affected its character as well.

When I ask Katie how she ended up at St. John’s she explains,

“I went to St. John’s because my husband was teaching with the order of priests that run St. John’s. So, it just seemed natural that we would go to their parish because he had befriended many of the priests there. So, we went because we knew the priest which was a neat experience, and we would go back to their residence afterwards for lunch and stuff and it just seemed like a natural community.”

When I ask if she investigated any other parishes before choosing St. John’s, she says,

“I don’t know that our choice was that conscious. I think it was more that we knew the priest there and they became good friends of ours and so it was kind of natural that we would go there. Prior to that, I lived as a Catholic Worker so I was going there and my husband didn’t particularly like the Sunday services there so he started going to St. John’s and then when I left the Catholic Worker I also started going to St. John’s.”

When I ask her about her first impression of St. John’s, she replies,

“It was justice-oriented and I guess my first impression was that it was predominantly white, kind of seemed a little white in terms of its music. There were African-Americans...well, there are Africans there, but not really African-Americans there, which is interesting particularly since it is right in that neighborhood. I thought that it might be more African-American. So, I was really surprised by that. But it is a very intelligent, very conscientious parish, very inviting of the marginalized and very much a proponent of the marginalized.”

In her interview, Katie identified herself in very similar terms, so it is no surprise that she also loves her parish and sees it as a vital part of her life. Still, while I stressed earlier that Katie is committed to the Church, it should also be said that compared to Grace and her forty years in the same neighborhood and parish, Katie is not nearly as invested in her community, which may help to explain why Katie is less wary (than Grace would be) of moving to a new city.

Tom, a Moderate Catholic

“I’d say I am a moderate Catholic. I think a moderate is somebody who practices the Catholic faith, who attends mass regularly, observes to the extent they can the holy days of obligation, um, somebody who recognizes and understands the traditions of the Catholic faith, but also puts them in the context of today and understands, sort of the reality of the Catholic faith and trying to live that faith in today’s environment.”

I meet Tom on a weekday evening at St. Boniface. He is 38-years old and is dressed smartly in business attire, having come directly from work. He works as a Director for Development at the local University and has a Bachelor’s degree in organizational communication. Tom, like Katie and Grace, is also a cradle Catholic, but his wife is not. While she attends Mass with him, she was born and raised as an Episcopalian, but agreed to raise their children Catholic. Tom feels that he is a mixture of liberal and traditional.

He values the tradition of the Catholic Church:

“I have always liked the tradition of the Catholic faith, and I think what makes me most proud is just the values that surround the Catholic faith, and especially the focus on family that comes from the Catholic faith.”

Thus, he wants the Church to stay connected to its roots, but his knowledge of past changes in the Church and his wife's experiences as an Episcopalian help him to imagine that things could also be different in the Church. He explains,

“Yes, there are ways that it should stay connected to the past because of the tradition. There are elements of our faith that I believe definitely need to be committed and connected to the past. And then yes, there are things that I think going forward probably ought to be reviewed again. You know, I am definitely, for example, the Catholic faith, I'm definitely pro-life, and so, and that's an old, traditional Catholic belief, and I want that to stay connected. As we look at possible changes going forward, such as the marriage of priests or the ordination of women, I would be more accepting of those, than I would the change from pro-life.”

He adds,

“I would be okay with the ordination of women as priests. I think, not just the necessity—because of the shortage of men entering the priesthood, but I am convinced that women could be as effective and as good at priesthood as men.

He also would be alright with having non-celibate priests and mentions that his father-in-law is an Episcopal priest. This gives him a unique perspective.

Again, because of my wife's faith and because if the Episcopal Church didn't allow that then she wouldn't be there, so, I think, you know, there are many things we talk about, you know, the purity of priests, but also we talk about the humanness of priests, and so I'm not so convinced that the issue of celibacy makes them, does it make them less Christ-like? Yes. But does that mean they would not be effective priests? I don't think so, I think they would be effective.”

Tom also sees the change to non-celibate priests more as an issue of pragmatism and a trade off between one good (Christ-like celibate priests) and an even higher good—receiving the Eucharist weekly.

“Receiving Communion is something that is central to my faith. I would not want to see that change because they don't have enough personnel to administer it, or because there's some change by the Vatican in terms of the order of the mass or something. That's one event that is central to my Catholic faith- receiving Communion weekly.”

In the end though, Tom is more afraid of negative consequences arising out of divisions between traditionalists and liberals than either Katie or Grace. He says,

“I think about the Episcopal church, which is clearly divided on some of these very same issues, but in many ways, I mean some Episcopal churches believe in the ordination of gay or lesbian priests and that has divided their church in many ways. And yet, in some ways, it’s strengthened them because I think they recognize the differences...I guess I think they divide. I just envision the day that, you know, they say, we will now ordain women. And a group of Catholics going off and, like other faiths have done, and saying, well then, we’re starting our own tradition, we’re starting our own faith.”

Politically, Tom identifies as a conservative Democrat. He acknowledges that his strong pro-life stance may sometimes conflict with his party affiliation, but he largely dismisses this and focuses on what connects between his religion and party saying,

“For conservative Democrats and the liberal Republicans, pro-life/pro-choice isn’t even an issue anymore, because they’re completely split, so, and again, I waffle on being a Democrat, too. To be honest with you, I don’t know what the Democratic statement is, my guess is that they are more pro-choice than they are pro-life, but again, I think there’s so many conservative Democrats now, I’m not sure that statement is true. So, am I pulled on my views from my political views and my religious views? Do they differ, no. In fact, I see more crossover between being a Democrat and a Catholic than I do being a Republican and a Catholic. I see Democrats being people who are interested in economic justice and in, um, fairness, you know, and it’s more consistent with the views of Catholicism than Republican, which to me appears more self-concerned, profit-making.”

Tom’s Moderate Parish

Whereas both Grace and Katie are located in large metropolitan areas with many Catholic parishes to choose from, Tom’s selection in town was much more limited. He explains that originally he and his family went to the other Catholic parish in town, before attending at St. Boniface. He says,

“We actually, when we first moved here, started attending St. R’ (the other parish in town). And we didn’t know there was another Catholic church. And it wasn’t until someone told us about St. Paul’s that we started attending there... [We found] it was more conducive to our family. We had been accustomed, again, to attending a little bit more of a non-traditional, a little bit more liberal church

connected with a college and university, one that had a Newman Center. We liked the, we liked that there just seemed to be more services and outreach to us as a young family.”

He describes St. Boniface as more liberal than the other parish in town, though he’s not sure that he would necessarily label the parish liberal. He notes,

“I guess I would consider St. R’s (the other parish in town) more traditional. I don’t know that I would really use the word...I wouldn’t use the word ‘liberal’ for St. Boniface, I would say ‘more liberal.’ Yeah.”

In comparison to St. Al’s and St. John’s, St. Boniface definitely seems more moderate, but I, myself, would probably characterize the parish as a moderate to liberal Catholic parish (with St. John’s viewed as an extremely liberal parish and St. Al’s as a moderately traditional parish).

In explaining, why he does not call St. Boniface liberal, Tom also seems to think of it as moderate to liberal. He says,

“When I think of a liberal Catholic parish, we talked earlier about those original connections to the original Church. And I still believe that St. Boniface remains a place that is connected to Catholicism. We are liberal, but not to the point of being non-Catholic. So that’s why I would say that.”

In fact, 79% of those I interviewed from the parish identified themselves as moderate Catholics (see Table 1.3). Thus, I label it as a moderate parish.

TABLE 1.3: CATHOLIC IDENTIFICATION AT ST. BONIFACE PARISH

When it comes to your religious identity, would you say you are a traditional, moderate, or liberal catholic or do none of these describe you?

	St. Boniface Parish	
	Number:	Percentage:
Traditional	1	5%
Moderate	15	79%
Liberal	2	11%
None of the Above	1	5%
Total	19	100%

In speaking of his first impression of the parish, Tom says,

“I remember it was much larger than the other college and university Catholic churches that we attended. The first time I attended St. Boniface, I did not find it to be terribly friendly. And that’s typical of a Catholic church. We don’t do a whole lot of mingling and socializing beforehand, shaking each others’ hands. Priests now are more, you know they mingle and shake your hand as you walk in the door. But I remember the first time, I thought it was clearly better than St. R’s.”

His impression of the parish has only improved with time, and Tom plans to continue being an active member of the parish in the years to come.

Overview

In the chapters to follow, I explore the diversity of religious identities in the Church and seek to explain how Catholics are able to maintain a sense of unity despite these differences. In chapter two, I first describe the meanings attached to traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic identity. I find that traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics describe themselves in very different terms and see divisions between each other, but most of my respondents consider these divisions to be healthy and still feel connected to other Catholics. As a result, I argue that these Catholic divisions do not constitute a culture war and suggest instead that these identities are competing ways of understanding one’s relationship with the Church. Most interestingly, these differences are often described by my respondents as creating complementary roles in the Church.

In chapter three, I explore the importance of religious movements for the creation and socialization of Catholic religious identities. I argue that religious movements are only peripherally connected to these identities, which helps to explain why ordinary Catholics are less antagonistic than a survey of Catholic religious movement organizations might suggest. I also point out the way that Catholics often use political

language and terms to define their religious differences. Yet, I find that these political terms are often inadequate for defining the differences my respondents recognize between traditional and liberal Catholics.

Finally, in chapter four, I consider the social bases of these religious divisions and contrast them with the social bases for political divisions. I also suggest that religious divisions among Catholics are relatively peaceful because these divisions often are encountered intergenerationally within families. Thus, contacts between traditional and liberal Catholics do not usually occur in the context of conflict-oriented religious disputes, but within the relative safety and solidarity of the familial setting.

Chapter 2- Traditional, Moderate and Liberal Catholics:

Understanding Catholic Religious Identification

What distinguishes traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic identities? Using data from my 50 in-depth interviews of Catholic parishioners, I explore my respondents' imagery and description of these religious identities. In so doing, I show how these parishioners engage in self-conscious reflection in choosing their religious identity, and I argue that Catholics' willingness to identify as traditional, moderate, or liberal is based upon placing themselves relative to competing, but not warring, ideal types.

As I mentioned in the introduction, Smith and his coauthors (1998) explored religious sub-cultural identity in his book, Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving, and saw the theory as an elaboration of the theory of "competitive marketing" developed by Finke, Stark, and Ianconne, which emphasized how religious entrepreneurs "market" and "sell" religious wares, or goods, within a religious economy. This approach views religious identities and religious services as "products" created and marketed to the public by religious elites.

In addition to focusing on religious elites in promoting religious identities, however, Smith (1998) suggested that sociologists should take seriously the everyday understandings of these religious identities among ordinary churchgoers (c.f., Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994). Modifying Berger's notion of a religious meaning system as a "sacred canopy," Smith argued that modern pluralism had removed the possibility of a single overarching religious meaning system that could provide a "sacred canopy" of religious meaning for the entire society. Instead, he suggested that modernity created an environment in which many different (and competing) subculturals exist. He argued that

the ecology of modern urban centers, especially, fosters the development of such subcultures, and these subcultural communities support competing meaning systems, which he termed “sacred umbrellas.” These “sacred umbrellas” are communal meaning systems that help members shelter and sustain the plausibility of their religious beliefs against the disbelief of others. These umbrellas, however, provide shelter only to those who choose to identify with and be a part of that subcultural community.

Identity is an oft-used concept that can mean different things to different people. Here, I define “religious identity,” similar to Smith (1998), as individuals’ subjective self-identification within the context of their religious lives. If identity is an individual’s answer to the basic question, “Who am I?”, then religious identity is the answer to the question “Who am I as a religious person?” In identifying oneself, one usually does so with reference to others by answering the question “Who are they?” in the process. Identity, in this sense, is intimately connected to notions of self-concept, but also to the development and maintenance of symbolic boundaries and concepts of “the other.” In this chapter, I suggest that traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics’ identities represent understandings of disagreements within the Catholic Church but also provide resources for promoting Catholic unity and managing the conflicts that arise from these disagreements.

Contextualizing Catholic Self-Identification

In my interviews, prior to asking any questions about religious self-identification, I first ask respondents about their background, what is most central to their faith, their experiences with mass and liturgy, their memories and thoughts regarding Vatican II, how they evaluate and critique sermons, what makes them feel proud or not so proud

about the Catholic Church, etc. Halfway through my questionnaire is the following question,

“If you had to say what type of a Catholic you are, what would you say? What would you label yourself? I am a <blank> Catholic.”

This question is open-ended, and I give respondents the opportunity to elaborate on whichever identity they mention. I include all freely-offered labels below in Table 2.1 and note that a few individuals describe themselves with several monikers (although I did not probe for more than one). I list in the table any and all identities mentioned.

TABLE 2.1: OPEN-ENDED CATHOLIC IDENTIFICATION

If you had to say what type of a Catholic you are, what would say? What would you label yourself? I am a <blank> Catholic.

	# who mentioned:*
Liberal/Progressive	12
Moderate/Middle of the Road	7
Traditional/Old-Fashioned	6
Practicing	6
Devout	5
Cafeteria	2
Good	2
Average/Regular	2
Fair/Poor	2
Additional Identifiers:	
Committed Catholic	Cradle Catholic
Conflicted Catholic	Struggling Catholic
Minimal Catholic	Open-Minded Catholic
Fallen Away Catholic	Careful Catholic
Divorced Catholic	Jesuit-formed Catholic
Semi-Heretic Catholic	Realistic Catholic
Lazy Catholic	

*Answers total to 57, rather than 50, because one respondent did not like labels and did not answer and several identified themselves with two or more monikers

The three labels most often mentioned in response to this question can be grouped as liberal, moderate, and traditional with minor re-categorization.¹ On the other hand, these three labels account for just under half of all non-prompted identities, with respondents using a wide variety of other descriptions to identify themselves in addition to liberal, moderate and traditional. Other identities chosen include “practicing Catholic,” “cafeteria Catholic,” “cradle Catholic,” and “fallen away Catholic,” along with many others.

After a respondent’s answer to the open-ended question above, I inquire,

“What if I ask the question this way? When it comes to your religious identity, would you say you are a traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholic or do none of these describe you?”

Only two out of my 50 respondents fail to identify themselves as either a traditional, moderate or liberal Catholic when asked this forced-choice question, and only 14% of Catholic respondents nationally chose “None of the above” when asked this question by interviewers at the National Opinion Research Center (see Table 2.2 for the overall distributions from both studies).

Though not all respondents freely offer the labels of traditional, moderate, and liberal when identifying themselves as Catholics, most readily identify themselves as such when asked the forced-choice question. As I discuss in more detail below, all of my respondents are also able to clearly and consistently articulate why they identify as a traditional, moderate or liberal Catholic. Thus, while these religious identities may not always be in the forefront of Catholics’ minds, they are a device used by Catholics to

¹For example, I equate middle-of-the-road with moderate, progressive with liberal, and old-fashioned with traditional.

understand themselves as religious individuals and to symbolically differentiate themselves from other Catholics.

TABLE 2.2: FORCED-CHOICE CATHOLIC IDENTIFICATION

When it comes to your religious identity, would you say you are a traditional, moderate, or liberal catholic or do none of these describe you?

Panel 1. In-Depth Interviews

	Number:	Percentage:
Traditional	10	20%
Moderate	24	46%
Liberal	14	30%
None of the Above	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Panel 2. General Social Survey 1998 & 2000

	Number:	Percentage:
Traditional	288	29%
Moderate	299	30%
Liberal	251	26%
None of the Above	139	14%
Other	7	1%
Total	984	100%

Traditional, Moderate, and Liberal Catholics:

How do they describe themselves and how do others describe them?

In his “culture war” thesis, Hunter (1991) argued that divisions between religious progressives and the religiously orthodox in the U.S. have become so conflict-ridden today that religious opponents now battle each other as enemies. Eschewing the warlike metaphors of opponents as enemies and activists as combatants found within Hunter’s “culture war” theory, Wuthnow (1989) proposed a less pugnacious understanding of religious divisions when he described them as revolving around “symbolic conflict.” Still, he argued that divisions within denominations have increased at the same time that

divisions between denominations have diminished. His theory suggested that recent cultural conflict had rearranged symbolic divisions such that traditional Catholics, conservative Protestants, and orthodox Jews may now feel that they have more in common with each other than each do with theological liberals in their own faith traditions.

Smith, in his research on Protestant identity, argued that Evangelical Protestants view themselves as embattled and attacked by others, but contrary to Hunter, it is not a result of their orthodox moral cosmology. Instead, it is due to the way that Evangelicals conceive of their relationship to society—they see themselves as called to evangelize and save a sinful world. This belief is integral to their identity as Evangelicals, and according to Smith, this tension with American society is actually the source of Evangelicals' religious vitality. While Smith did not directly examine Wuthnow's claim that divisions between denominations and faith traditions are less important than those within them, his research corroborated Wuthnow's theory insofar as "evangelical" identity cut across Protestant denominations and highlighted divisions existing within all of them. On the other hand, "evangelical" identity did not reach across faith traditions to Catholics and Jews, and Smith pointedly stressed that the "evangelical" identity had neither replaced nor erased denominational differences, implicitly challenging Wuthnow's second argument that divisions between denominations were disappearing.

What about Catholics? What does it mean to be a traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholic? Are traditional and liberal Catholics engaged in a culture war? If not a "culture war," do they at least feel closer to like-minded Protestants than their "opposites" within Catholicism? The GSS national survey data cannot provide us with

the meanings that everyday Catholics attach to traditional, moderate and liberal identification, nor can they tell us how conflictual are the relations between traditionals and liberals. To address these questions, I turn to my in-depth interviews.

Traditional Catholics: Sources of Stability

First, let us hear how self-identified traditional Catholics describe themselves.

When I ask Carrie about her religious identity, she pauses and declares that she is “traditional to moderate” and “if forced to choose” she would identify as a traditional Catholic. When I ask why, she replies,

“Probably because changes are ok, but I like the *traditional* church. I’m trying to think of how to explain. I still have a lot of the old...I was raised with a lot of the old traditions, even though I was Vatican II, my parents were not and my mom’s parents were not...so I was raised with a lot of the old Catholic ways. A lot of the old Catholic beliefs. And I like those. Even though it’s probably on a different level than the way my grandparents believed it, it still...they are still very important types of items. *Moderate* would be, ‘it’s ok for some of the more modern changes that have come into play...the Vatican II changes are fine.’ I like the tradition. I like our Mass. I like that the mass has never changed as far as the intent of the mass, the purpose of the mass. Now, the celebration has changed, but the mass itself has not. So, I wouldn’t want that to change. I wouldn’t want us to go too *liberal* with it either. I’m comfortable with it.” (Age 43, Business Analyst for Insurance Company)

Carrie articulates several important and connected ideas in her response. First, she emphasizes the importance of defending against too much change within the Church, and she sees the Catholic Mass as a source of stability because its intent has stayed the same, even though the “celebration” of it has changed.² Second, she connects herself with Catholics and Catholicism as these existed prior to Vatican II in terms of liking the “old Catholic ways” and “old Catholic beliefs.” However, she recognizes that her views are “probably on a different level than the way my grandparents believed,” thus

² It is interesting to note that she speaks of the “celebration” of the mass. Prior to Vatican II, it was much more common to discuss the “sacrifice” of the mass. Thus, her conception of the mass itself shows change among Catholics, although she might not recognize it as such since she was born in 1960.

acknowledging generational differences. Importantly, she underscores that she is “comfortable” with the Church, suggesting that she fears a diminishment of this feeling if too much change occurs and continuity is lost. Finally, Carrie defines herself as a traditional relative to moderates and liberals.

Deirdre also identifies as traditional and highlights the importance of “the old ways.” She says,

“I believe in the old ways—in the original, traditional Mass. I’ve never been to a Latin Mass, but there’s other ways of being traditional—in the beliefs. It used to be what they would call sin to sleep with someone before you’re married. I believe that, I honestly believe that, and I am not condemning anyone else who does, but that’s just my personal opinion. I would consider myself definitely traditional.” (Age 36, Teacher at a Hebrew School)

Again, the major emphasis is on tradition and the unchanging mass, but Deirdre explicitly acknowledges that the mass is no longer in Latin. Since the experience of the mass has changed as a result, she emphasizes the beliefs as unchanging, much as Carrie does by insisting that the intent of the mass has not changed. Interestingly, however, Dierdre does not go on to speak of unchanging beliefs connected to the mass. While Vatican II altered the ritual of the mass, many beliefs and practices surrounding the mass remain unchanged. For example, the mass is still composed of two parts—*the Liturgy of the Word*, which centers around scriptural readings and the proclamation of the Gospel followed by a short homily, and *the Liturgy of the Eucharist*, which centers around the consecration of the bread and wine followed by the receiving of communion. Deirdre could have illustrated continuity of beliefs by, for example, citing the Liturgy of the Eucharist’s continued importance vis-à-vis the Liturgy of the Word for traditional Catholics. Instead, she links traditional religious beliefs to sexual ethics (specifically, pre-marital intercourse) to make her point. I will return to this later, but let me stress that

this emphasis on beliefs about sexuality and sexual ethics is common among my respondents. I want to suggest that Deirdre highlights beliefs about sexual ethics because these beliefs, not those surrounding the mass, are what most differentiate her from liberal Catholics. Finally, she suggests a second theme of traditionalism, beyond simply resisting change within the Church, by stressing the importance of adhering to Church rules concerning sexual ethics when she declares “I believe that, I honestly believe that.”

While some might see Dierdre’s emphasis on personal assent here as merely a way of showing continuity with the “old ways” of the Church and its unchanging beliefs, I believe that her statement reflects the importance that traditional Catholics place on rules and obeying the laws of the Church. Another respondent, Carla, in discussing why she identifies as a traditional Catholic, clearly identifies this second theme of strict adherence to beliefs when she declares,

“I’m a traditional Catholic. I’ve tried to follow the rules and tried to understand what these rules mean and that’s what I think. I don’t question, but I try to understand and pray to believe that they are the right thing and they are the just thing.” (Age 80, retired Secretary)

She accepts the Church’s rules and tries to understand them, even if she does not always succeed. Based upon my interview with Carla, I think that questioning the rules of the Church would signal to her that she is no longer within the comforting confines of the Church because such questioning is a violation of the social boundaries between the laity and the ordained. Carla recognizes that her unquestioning acceptance of the Church was instilled in her as a child when she says,

“I was brought up to respect. My mother said, ‘You do not ever tell a priest that he’s wrong, you accept what he tells you,’ and so it made me kind of fear. In fact, this one priest told me he thought I oughta be a nun, and I told him, ‘I couldn’t stand the closeness of the convent, I don’t think I’m called to be a nun.’ ‘Oh,’ he

said, 'I think you'd make a wonderful nun.' I said, 'Sorry, Father,' and I told my mother that and she was real upset with me."

Other self-identified traditional Catholics also emphasize "strict belief" and suggest that this is a result of their upbringing. For example, Lisa states

"I think I adhere strictly to Catholic belief, and I know that that comes to me from my childhood. And it's that, um, strictness that is a part of me from my childhood." (Age 57, Professor)

Beth also underscores the importance of how she was raised when she says,

"I'd say traditional. I just sort of live by the way I was brought up and always practiced religion. Always go to mass on Sunday, it's rare that I would miss a mass on Sunday. But then that goes back to my childhood, we just didn't miss mass on Sunday." (Age 82, retired Court Clerk Editor)

Interestingly, Beth highlights the act of "going to mass" rather than assent to particular religious beliefs in her self-description. While traditional Catholics generally stress orthodoxy (or right beliefs), it is sometimes accompanied and complemented by their emphasis on the importance of orthopraxy- understood as attending mass and fulfilling one's Sunday obligation. As I will discuss later, liberal Catholics, in their focus on social justice, are usually the ones who highlight orthopraxy (or right action) in relationship to their religious identity. However, the importance of "right action" for liberal Catholics is almost always understood in terms of "treating people right" or acting justly. Thus, for Beth, it is the action of regular mass attendance, rather than treating people justly, that she as a traditional Catholic connects to her childhood.

How do non-traditional Catholics describe traditional Catholics? Sometimes in more negative terms. For example, some suggest that there is a discrepancy between traditional Catholics' words and deeds. When I ask Ron, a self-identified liberal Catholic, what comes to mind when he imagines a traditional Catholic, he replies,

“Well the first thing that comes to mind is pay, pray, and obey. Don’t bother me with issues; whatever the Church says is fine. And I do think that by and large they let the Church be their conscience. I don’t think that’s universal, but its close. Whatever the Church says IS... They struggle. I feel for them, because a lot of the behaviors of the traditional Catholics negate what they tell you they believe...

Brian: Do you have an example of that?

“Yeah, you know the whole conception control or birth control issue-Catholics, even traditional Catholics never really bought into that. And I don’t know what the figures are on that, but they’re well over 80% or more who just don’t pay attention to that, and yet these are people who say that whatever the Vatican says... Well that seems to be an exception. The contradictions of the pro-life movement that they don’t oppose capital punishment, they don’t fight for gun control, or treatment of little children or the elderly-and yet they say they’re pro-life. They operate with this dichotomy, this ambivalence between what I say I am and what we really do.” (Age 73, retired Professor)

This point is echoed by Paul, another self-identified liberal Catholic, when he says,

“This is the reason I would consider myself more liberal than traditional- my view of a traditional, or even more so a conservative—and the two are almost synonymous in my view—is pre-Vatican II, and it is not necessarily practice what you preach, but definitely preach.” (Age 34, Real Estate Agent)

Another criticism of traditionalists is that they are old-fashioned, scrupulous to a fault, and resistant to any kind of change. As Gary, a self-identified moderate Catholic, says,

“A traditional Catholic? I think of my wife’s grandmother, you know. Old school, she’s in her 80s, that’s the way it was, you know. The Catholic Church has been doing this for thousands of years, therefore it should continue, we should continue to do it for thousands of years. I just think of an old Catholic sanctuary, you know, dark, dreary, no lighting, and a bunch of old people. I hate to say that, but...” (Age 34, State Trooper)

Carol, another moderate Catholic, describes traditional Catholics similarly,

“Oh, some of these people who are doing things the way they did them a hundred years ago. Worried about every little thing. Everything’s a sin. (laughs) And you have to do all these things. I mean, if you miss mass for whatever reason, you’re going straight to hell. Oh, that’s ridiculous. (Age 73, retired Professor)

While the above depictions of traditional Catholics are unflattering and rather critical,

they do not contain the vitriol that most would associate with a “culture war.”

Furthermore, other Catholics are about as likely to cast traditionals in a positive as a negative light.³

For instance, while some non-traditionals consider traditional Catholics’ views to be old-fashioned and their resistance to change a negative, Bob, a moderate Catholic, defends their stance, defining it as a generational difference.

“Traditionalists are saying, be careful, go slow, have good reasons to change, let’s not change so much right away. It’s almost, sometimes you might say, elders versus younger. Younger people in general are quick to make changes where older people say, well, “How many changes have I made that I messed up?” You know, where young people haven’t had that chance to mess up yet. That’s what I’d say is the biggest difference is somebody that wants something, why can’t they do it right now because they see so clearly with limited experience, limited knowledge whereas the old folks maybe are too slow to change because of the experience and knowledge that they’ve gained.” (Age 65, retired Electrical Engineer)

In addition, while some suggest a divide between traditional Catholics’ words and deeds, others see traditionals as active Catholics committed to living out their faith daily; even citing specific individuals whom they identify as traditional and regard as virtuous.

Denise, who identifies as a liberal Catholic, mentions a relative she respects,

“I have an aunt who I would call a traditional Catholic, and she goes to mass every Sunday and every Holy Day and she’s very involved in her parish, has the priest over for dinner, raised her kids that way... (Age 41, Paralegal)

Similarly, in speaking of a friend’s mother, Dave, a moderate Catholic, adds,

“Good Irish mother, again, she would be the one that I’d think of as a very traditional type Catholic, she definitely, very traditional. She would always talk to us about the Catholic religion, good versus bad. Very good person. A saint, kind of a woman. She kinda lead me into Catholicism years ago.” (Age 52, General Contractor)

Overall, most non-traditional Catholics use relatively neutral language (or a combination

³ In my interviews, 36% of non-traditional Catholics depict traditionals in negative terms, 41% in relatively neutral terms, and 23% in positive terms.

of positive and negative) in depicting traditional Catholics and generally highlight the same major themes that traditional Catholics stress in describing themselves. Shannon, who identifies as a liberal Catholic, describes traditional Catholics this way,

“I don’t know. I guess I think of a traditional Catholic as someone who is completely happy with the way things are organized [in the Church] and they don’t have too many questions about fundamental kind of policies. So, I guess I think of them as pretty happy with the ways things are. Although you might also add that they would be someone who would be more likely to say the rosary often, or have crucifixes on their wall at home or something.” (Age 34, Librarian)

A self-identified moderate, Pete, highlights traditional Catholics’ reverential attitude, but also notes that they may have a tendency to be perceived as judgmental when it comes to some religious issues.

“I think there’s a certain reverence that traditional Catholics have that others don’t. I think at times there’s a perceived judgmental attitude or a militant attitude on certain things, whether it’s a right to life issue or birth control, those kinds of things. (Age 36, Claims Manager)

Others see traditional Catholics, in addition to liking the Church the way it is, as rule followers. Al, a moderate Catholic, argues this when he says,

“A traditional Catholic is someone who is going to pretty well follow the rules as they understand it, not make too many adjustments that don’t include the rules...a real follower, someone who likes the older style of the Church, the more conservative style of the Church, which would be the more traditional ceremonies, observing the saint days, people who take all of those things into account. (Age 71, Retired from Organization Management)

As some of the quotes above suggest, non-traditional Catholics consistently imagine traditionals as older Catholics, recognizing the generational divide that I will discuss in later chapters.⁴ For example, before speaking of traditional Catholics’ reverence and judgmentalism, Pete’s initial response to my asking him “what comes to mind when imagining a traditional Catholic” was,

⁴ Interestingly, my respondents’ quotes suggest age or life-course causal mechanisms in addition to generational processes as creating this division.

“Not necessarily what, I think it’s who. There’s certain folks at the parish that...I would describe as an older parishioner.” (Age 36, Claims Manager)

This image is reiterated by Jessica, along with the themes of resistance to change and strict adherence to the rules of the Church that are consistently repeated as well,

“I’m thinking, I think of a generational thing, even though I know young people who are traditional Catholics. Where they like everything exactly the way it is. I think that’s part of it. Like they, they really want to keep it the way it is. But I also think, when I think of a traditional Catholic I think of someone who agrees with everything, not necessarily everything but agrees with all of the major precepts of the Catholic Church. I don’t agree with all of them. So, someone like my father who was, you know, very committed but didn’t want anything to change and really thought that, yeah, things really didn’t need to change.” (Age 29, Professor)

In conclusion, traditional Catholics—both in their own self-descriptions and in the eyes of others—enjoy the Church the way it is and are therefore resistant to change.

They emphasize the central importance of the mass. They speak of a desire to live in a world of “black and white,” where right and wrong are clearly laid out by an enduring and steadfast Church. Their acceptance of the dictates of the Church serves as a basis for personal humility and reverence as well as institutional vitality, but can also lead to charges that they are close-minded, judgmental, and fail to practice what they preach.

For traditionals, maintaining links to the past and respecting the rules of the Church are of the utmost importance for ensuring a strong Catholic identity; for older Catholics especially this can often be traced to their upbringing. For traditionals, it is necessary to preserve and uphold the institutional Church because it is a source of comfort and stability in their lives and, as the repository of the “deposit of faith”, provides moral certitude in uncertain times.

Liberal Catholics: Agents of Change

What about liberal Catholics? What does it mean to be a liberal Catholic? In explaining why he identifies as a liberal Catholic, Ron states,

“I think rules are important as a foundation, and I don’t really believe they’re there to be broken, but there are times you don’t take them seriously. I guess a lot of the things that I would hold as Catholic attitudes are kind of fringe things. I don’t see why homosexuals aren’t given full status in the Church and receive the sacraments. I don’t know why we treat women the way we treat them. I see nothing wrong with ordaining women and married persons. Those are all pretty liberal notions, so I think in that respect, the way I would define myself is a liberal. (Age 73, retired Professor)

Whereas traditional Catholics stress strict adherence to rules, Ron’s statement suggests that among liberal Catholics, people (i.e. homosexuals, women, married people) are more important than rules, and rules should not be taken too seriously. Consequently, he has rather explicit ideas about ways that the Church should change to be more inclusive with respect to women, priestly celibacy and homosexuals, and he recognizes that these beliefs contradict the current rules. This emphasis on dissatisfaction with the current rules or policies is echoed by Shannon,

“I guess I say that [I am a liberal Catholic] because of my problems with some church policies, I don’t know if that’s the right word for it or not, but with some church policies and with problems with the leadership and the way things are working out with that and you know the role of women in the church. I have no desire to be a priest but I think people should be able to if they want to, should have some opportunity. So I guess that would place me as, I label myself as liberal.” (Age 34, Librarian)

Among liberal Catholics, there is repeated mention of changing specific Church teachings (regarding female priests, married priests, homosexuality, contraception, etc.) that are seen as hurtful, and a belief that the Church should place more importance on including people than obeying rules.

Frank emphasizes another important theme of liberal Catholics, open-mindedness,

which is connected to their emphasis on change and relative indifference to following the rules of the Church, when he says,

“Well I just feel like I am willing to open up to a whole lot of people and I am not there to judge them and say you ought to be doing this and that, or whatever. I think that the Catholic Church today is so strict and their emphasis is on doing it my way or there’s only one way to do it, and they cut out so many people and oppress so many people with some of their attitudes. You know for example they won’t even talk about abortion, and anything related to abortion they just throw it out. I have seen where they just throw everything out, so Planned Parenthood is evil along with everything else.” (Age 70, retired from Information Technology)

In his open-mindedness, Frank resists forming a harsh moral judgment of persons including traditionals, although he shows no hesitation in severely judging the institution of the Church. He emphasizes that there can be more than one right way to do something and this illustrates his and other liberals’ major problem with strictness and rigid rules.

When the Church rules out alternatives, it excludes people from the Church.

Paul also highlights open-mindedness and opposition to the Church judging others as outside of salvation when he articulates why he considers himself a liberal Catholic,

“The open-mindedness, I truly believe that the only thing that separates people is their morals, and their values. Creed is only a practice and I do not believe that only Catholics can get to Heaven, and I don’t believe that only Christians can get to Heaven. When I was teaching, I think one of my most mind-opening experiences was when I was at a local school. Here it was, a Catholic school, and we had students from 16 different countries. I was a minority in my American Lit classes, both of them. Kids from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan... and I befriended them. They were a wonderful group of kids. No, they were not Catholic. No, they were not Christian, but in getting to know them we had a lot of the same views and I think it was from that experience that I decided that we were not as different as people claimed. I think as long as someone is willing to treat other people right, and right being subjective, but I think moralistically people know what right is in a broad sense, and as long as they are doing right by other people and by themselves then I think creed is too defining in terms of who gets into heaven and who doesn’t. Did I answer your question? (Age 34, Real Estate Agent)

For Paul, being a liberal Catholic means being open to non-Catholics going to heaven, but more, he believes that the Church as the “People of God” should be inclusive of all

who “treat other people right,” that is, act justly. So, rules that exclude people, instead of including them, are a hindrance rather than a help in creating “the Kingdom of God.”

Thus, Paul illustrates the emphasis on moral action and acting rightly that is characteristic of liberal Catholics. It would be inaccurate to say that Paul wants to remove all judgments and boundaries. Instead, he sees rules and boundaries differently and wants to focus on solidarity with others and acting with justice, rather than on membership within the Church and maintaining correct beliefs.

Because liberal Catholics see the current rules as excluding people, they seek change within the Church. Jane, in saying why she is a liberal Catholic, puts it succinctly,

“Because I am for change.” (Age 73, retired Financial Officer)

Cathy also links her identity as a liberal Catholic to change when she says,

“Because I think that we ought to be open to change. That’s one of the meanings, open to change and open to differences. To me that’s one, or actually two of the meanings of liberal- open to difference and open to change. Try it we might like it.” (Age 64, retired Teacher)

When pushed, Cathy goes on to make clear that being open to change is connected to notions of progress and open-mindedness, and she does not see all change as progress. Some changes are simply reversals or perhaps narrow-minded changes made from on high by an out-of-touch hierarchy. For instance, after I point out to Cathy that she earlier noted her dislike of the latest changes in rubrics, or the “norms” regarding liturgical issues such as when one kneels or stands or how one responds during prayers, Cathy contends,

“Reversals, those aren’t changes, those are reversals.”

Brian: Okay. And what’s the difference between a reversal and a change?

A change is going out and exploring something new, it's something you haven't done before and a reversal is going back to the way it was because the way it was was right. Was the only right way.

Brian: Do you like the bow before communion?

Well I don't. If people want to that's fine. I don't.

Brian: Did we do that before? (She shakes her head no) And yet would you see it as a reversal?

No, because we didn't do it before, I would see it as these nice men in Rome who wear these red dresses think that it will make people more aware of what they're doing if they take the time out to bow.

Brian: So do you think your perception of change has to do with where change comes from, or the type of change that occurs or?

Well I mean anybody, the lay people in the church could demand that the priest start saying a Latin mass, that's how come some of the churches have Latin masses. But if they want to have a Latin mass for people who like Latin masses, I don't have a problem with that. I guess I'm gonna have to keep going back to this openness bit. Wherever there is, what I would call regression, and by regression I don't mean anything necessarily bad, often it's going back to something perceived as safer and I don't think religion's supposed to be a safe thing. I think it's probably the riskiest thing anybody can do—religious life, prayer life, sacrament... I mean to me...the ones they've canonized have been far out there. I mean far out for their time and so to me cautiousness doesn't have any place in religion. So change can be anything, change can be looking at something new, or it can be going back to something I feel safe with, or it could be going back to something that I think is better or it can be anything but it's... To me change is such a weird word because it can be so many things. You know I would decry lack of openness and lack of acceptance, lack of fearlessness. I mean how can you be a Catholic, how can you approach God if you aren't fearless. I mean you have to have a certain fearlessness otherwise you'd just crawl around on the ground with your head in your arms or something...I don't know."

Cathy colorfully demonstrates that liberals want change that is connected to openness and inclusiveness and not just change for the sake of change. Still, Liberal Catholics' emphasis on openness and their basically positive orientation towards change are in contrast to traditional Catholics' emphasis on reverence and stability and their general

resistance to change.

How do non-liberal Catholics describe liberal Catholics? Other Catholics sometimes describe liberal Catholics in more negative terms, suggesting that liberals embrace a self-centered focus in trying to change the Church to suit themselves or implying that liberals have not thought through the consequences of change. Carol, a self-identified moderate Catholic, in speaking of liberals, declares,

“Oh, these people who...oh, its kind of like situation ethics—how they feel at the moment. They take a more liberal, a freer view of everything. They think of themselves.” (Age 73, Retired Professor)

Similarly, Joan, another moderate, argues,

“They call themselves Catholic but they do what they darn well please. They don’t give any consideration whether there’s a reason behind what the Bishop might say or Pope might say.” (Age 61, Housewife)

Another negative attributed to liberal Catholics is their lack of commitment to the Church as symbolized by inconsistent mass attendance or lack of reverence for the sacraments.

For example, Tracy, who identifies as a moderate, reasons,

“I think more liberal is probably someone who just goes to church on holidays or maybe just doesn’t go to church, I guess that’s what I think of.” (Age 30, stay-at-home mom)

Likewise, Kathy, a traditional Catholic, claims,

“I see a liberal Catholic as someone who is a lot more relaxed in the outward signs of their faith like attending mass or believing in confession. Maybe someone who doesn’t take the sacraments as seriously as they’re supposed to be taken.” (Age 37, stay-at-home mom)

Some connect a lack of knowledge about the Church to liberals’ lack of rule following and suggest that, even if liberals have faith, they are not as devout or as committed to the Church. For example, Deirdre, another self-identified traditional Catholic, suggests,

“Liberal Catholics are modern. Not steeped in tradition. Kind of lacking in the faith. That may not be the term. Not as devout in tradition, in the ways of the Church. Liberal, maybe they’re for abortion, as where most traditional Catholics are not. Kind of doing what they prefer to do and not follow the rules of the Church.” (Age 36, Teacher at a Hebrew School)

Much like the negative descriptions of traditionals, while non-liberals sometimes provide an unflattering portrait of liberals, they certainly do not describe them as enemies with whom they are currently at war. Additionally, almost as often as negative, other Catholics describe liberals in positive terms (again similar to the descriptions of traditional Catholics).⁵

Al, a moderate Catholic, underscores liberals’ openness to change and readiness to make up their own mind rather than just follow the rules regarding sexual ethics. He also suggests that liberals are more willing than others to move outside their comfort zone in order to include people.

“A liberal Catholic is someone who is more open to change, who is not always as concerned about all the rules as more traditional people might be, people who have made their own personal decisions about things like birth control and abortion and other significant issues that don’t necessarily come down in line with the church positioning, who like to see color in the services, inclusion in the community...I think of liberal people as being more interested in seeing more of that within their congregation or parish, or more willingness to be accepting of that. People who don’t care if kneelers are in the church or not; or if the right garb is being worn, or all of that. Just more open to a different sense of how it can be done. I know some people don’t want to come to our parish because they don’t feel comfortable and want to be at a more traditional parish where they can feel more protected and sheltered and don’t have to think about all those ideas. (Age 71, Retired from Organization Management)

John also emphasizes liberals’ readiness for change and their willingness to personally grapple with contemporary issues (especially sexuality).

“I think a liberal Catholic is willing to accept a great deal of change, and is willing also to try to grapple with living in the society we live in here, and it

⁵ In my interviews, 34% of non-liberal Catholics depicted liberals in negative terms, 41% in relatively neutral terms, and 24% in positive terms.

certainly doesn't have to be the United States, maybe it would be better to take Italians or something like that. How does an Italian deal with the pope's stance on sexuality, you know? A liberal Catholic is struggling with those issues, a traditional Catholic has no problem with those and says, "if I am going to be in the Catholic Church I must be either married or celibate, no choice in between, I must reject certain kinds of sexuality." I don't know. Certainly reject birth control. Sexuality would be a good example to use for a liberal Catholic, it's not like they are saying anything goes, but they are grappling with that issue." (Age 53, Cook)

Some challenge the identification of liberal Catholics with a lack of commitment to the Church and suggest that the differences are more connected to their views on issues rather than a deficiency or deviation from traditional obligations. For example, Tom, a moderate Catholic, observes,

"I would say the difference between the moderate and the liberal would be, again, because I believe that the liberals are still practicing Catholics, you know, they don't really deviate a whole lot from the traditional obligations of being Catholic, but probably in their views, the difference between the moderate and the liberal is that the liberal, you know, maybe they're...we were talking pro-life, I think a liberal Catholic would be, could be, pro-choice. And a, to me, a moderate Catholic wouldn't be, they would be pro-life. So, it's more about their views of, not so much their practices, but about their views." (Age 38, Director of Development)

Overall, as I found for traditional Catholics, other Catholics tend to use relatively neutral language (or a combination of positive and negative) to depict liberal Catholics and usually describe liberals in much the same way that liberals describe themselves, at least in highlighting their openness to change in the Church and the importance they place on personal interpretation of rules. Other Catholics also correctly recognize many of the issues that liberal Catholics identify in describing themselves. For example, Lisa, who identifies as a traditional Catholic, observes of liberal Catholics

"Probably someone who, um, wants a few more changes in the church, perhaps a greater incorporation of the laity in decision making, the ordination of women as priests, might even be more liberal than that with respect to birth control, maybe even in some instances abortion, and maybe even someone who would take a more independent stance with respect to issues like confession and communion. I

mean, the church has certain rules that it has promulgated about that, and maybe, you know, someone who disagrees says, I will, you know, make my own decision, I will follow my conscience independently of what the church says about certain things.” (Age 57, Professor)

Dave, a self-identified moderate, emphasizes liberal Catholics’ cultural openness while in the process giving his own impression of liberals’ clothing habits and artistic sensibility,

“A liberal Catholic is one that is going to have Birkenstock sandals on. They’re gonna dress a little differently. Their ideas are gonna be more open. They’re not gonna care much about having kneelers in the church. More, they might like to have a flute and an African Drum for music. Somebody who would look at the Stations of the Cross as more of a nice art work. Not saying that in a bad way.” (Age 52, General Contractor)

Finally, Beth, a traditional Catholic, says,

“I suppose that they- a liberal Catholic- I think that they can probably accept the changes that are taking place, and are going to take place better than I can. And I can accept them because you have to, but I can still practice the way I am used to right now. I’d think that probably the women’s movement would be on the side of the liberal. And that’s alright. But I still, I guess I am traditional enough that I still like the priests to be male.” (Age 82, retired Court Clerk Editor)

In conclusion, liberal Catholics seek to change the Church because they want it to be a more just institution. They speak of a desire to live in an open-minded and just world, where being inclusive of individuals is more important than following rules. Their search for justice through change requires a certain fearlessness in moving outside their comfort zone and courage to seek continued personal and institutional growth, but leads to charges that they are self-centered or off-the-wall in their beliefs and lack a genuine commitment to the Church that can withstand personal vicissitudes. For liberals, changing the Church to make it more open and welcoming to women and homosexuals and more ecumenical in character will make it a more just institution. Liberals believe that it is important that the Church change and become a more just institution because, as the body of Christ, it should be a source of justice and prophetic action in the world.

Moderate Catholics: Mixed Feelings

And what about moderate Catholics? What does it mean to be a moderate Catholic? Similar to liberal Catholics, moderates often stress the importance of personal judgment in applying Church beliefs. Like traditional Catholics, moderates often underscore the value of reverence and/or stability and mention the central importance of tradition. For example, Joan explains why she is a moderate this way,

“Because I like the tradition, but I like the new part. I mean I am not traditional. I would be liberal in my feelings on birth control. And in moderate, I think I am not, I don’t know whether liberals think that people should come to church in jeans and cut offs. I think we should show a little bit more respect. So that would be leaning toward the traditional side. I am kind of a mixture, so that’s why I would be a moderate. (Age 61, Housewife)

Perhaps the most intriguing point regarding moderates is that they seem to have no clear identity of their own. Rather, as Joan says above, most see themselves as “a mixture” of traditional and liberal Catholics.

Sam also identifies as a moderate. He notes,

“I don’t fall into the truly traditional. I think the truly traditional are the Catholics who still cling to the pre-Vatican II. I don’t consider myself a liberal in that I still believe in some of the teachings on not marrying priests, not ordaining women, although those may change someday. I am accepting of women as being, serving an active role in the ministry. So, I would say I am a moderate Catholic.” (Age 44, Building Maintenance)

Instead of first highlighting how he is a mixture of the two, he stresses how he does not fit perfectly into either of the categories of traditional or liberal. Notably, though, he does not identify as “none of the above,” but chooses moderate. I believe this is because he mixes traditionals’ and liberals’ differing stances with regard to change in the Church. Since Sam sees himself as accepting of the changes that have already occurred in the Church regarding women’s role in ministry and open to more change but also

comfortable with how the Church is today, he identifies as a moderate. (He also illustrates the importance of reference groups in religious identification.)

Similarly, Carol begins to say she is a traditional Catholic, but then shakes her head and settles on moderate Catholic. When I ask her why, she replies,

“Ok, I said traditional because I believe in the mass and the traditional way that I was brought up. The things in the law, but in the things in the law, there is some that I agree and disagree with. Confession never really appealed to me, even though at Catholic school we were marched to confession constantly...So, in that way, I’m liberal. I don’t feel this need to go to confession the way I see some people constantly going to confession. Birth control, I - all you have to do is look around the church and see that people are not practicing what the Catholic Church says, or their families wouldn’t be limited to two, or three or four, you know. Look and see how many have one or two children. And I don’t have any objection to that. We were taught that lesbians and gays were wrong, yet we’re accepting them freely into the church now. And participate in everything. So I mean, some of those traditional views have changed over the years. And I go along with the change.” (Age 73, Retired Professor)

On the one hand, Carol identifies with traditionals because of her belief in the mass and the way she was brought up. On the other hand, she recognizes that she disagrees with Church teaching regarding birth control and the importance of confession, and she is fine with Church participation by individuals in openly gay relationships and “goes along with the change.” Because she identifies with both traditionals and liberals but not perfectly with either, she ends up classifying herself as a moderate Catholic.

In addition to identifying themselves as a mixture, moderates often stress that they are not extremists. For example, Paula, after identifying herself as “a moderate to liberal Catholic”, says,

“Well, I’m not attracted to any really extreme position, but I see a lot of valid points in what liberal Catholics talk about. You know more lay involvement and engagement. I just am not willing, I sense in some liberals a desire to do away with the hierarchy and that’s not where I am. I’m not that liberal. So that’s why I wouldn’t put myself firmly in the liberal camp. Like I said there are some aspects of the worship that I don’t want changed but by and large I can accept a liberal

agenda. You know far more lay involvement, more engagement of women and things like that.” (Age 30, Administrative Assistant)

Paula’s response, along with Carol’s earlier, illustrates that moderate Catholics frequently see themselves as either leaning traditional or leaning liberal when they identify as moderate Catholics.

How do others describe moderate Catholics? Fewer of my respondents characterize moderate Catholics in either a positive or a negative manner as compared to the other two identities.⁶ The negative quality most often attributed to moderate Catholics is that they are not active in the Church. This is not a result of anger or disagreement (as some suggest is the case for liberals) but simple indifference or apathy. Kathy, a traditional Catholic, has this to say about moderates,

“I would say that might be somebody like my brother. Who was born and raised Catholic, you know would go to mass if you took him, but won’t go on his own. Who definitely believes in God and prays but doesn’t really do much more than that. Somebody who, it’s not a bad thing, it’s not they’re bad people, but sort of someone who would be fine if you led them by the hand, but on their own is sort of just stuck in one place. (Age 37, stay-at-home mom)

Similarly, Deirdre, another traditional Catholic, asserts,

“Moderate, my opinion, in my interpretation moderate would be part-time. They’re in tradition but yet they could take it or leave it, they’re not as far as tradition they could take it either way I mean basically they once or twice a year go to Church and that’s it.” (Age 36, Teacher at a Hebrew School)

And again, Hank, who identifies as a liberal Catholic, maintains of moderates,

“A guy we call the ‘creasters’. They come to church on Christmas and Easter. Yeah, they just say on Easter Sunday you’ve got to make room for the ‘creasters’ and same way with midnight mass.” (Age 71, retired Banker and Politician)

Based on my interviews, this depiction of moderates as part-time Catholics is inaccurate, but other Catholics seemed to lack a clear vision of moderates when

⁶ Only 25% and 15% of non-moderate Catholics depicted moderates in negative and positive terms, respectively. The other 60% used relatively neutral terms and were not very descriptive overall.

compared to their images of traditionalists and liberals. I believe this illustrates that moderates do not have a distinct identity to claim as their own. While they describe themselves as a mixture of traditional and liberal, others are just as likely to see them as being uninterested or “lukewarm” because they lack a clear agenda. This lack of a distinct moderate identity is especially obvious in my interview with Phil. Phil initially claims to be a “traditional-liberal Catholic” before settling on an identity as a liberal Catholic. He explains,

“There’s a part of me that’s really traditional. There are a lot of Catholics, for instance, who don’t have any affinity with the rosary at all. That’s a conservative Catholic thing. So in fact, I’ve got some liberal Catholic friends, who are like ‘The rosary? That’s old-time business; that’s now new Catholic.’ But to me, it’s like why not? So I weave the traditional into the liberal...

Brian: But you didn’t say that you felt that you were a moderate Catholic right?

“Well moderate to me is a cop-out. Perhaps I am. Perhaps because I’m a little traditional and a little liberal, it makes me a moderate Catholic, but to me, that’s kind of like being lukewarm, you know? It’s like Christ said, “Give me hot or cold; don’t give me lukewarm. Give me one or the other.” (Age 39, Musician)

Similarly, Ken, a traditional Catholic, describes moderates as “somebody with tepid fervor.” (Age 61, Industrial Instrumentation) It seems, for some Catholics, traditional and liberal are the only real identities out there, and moderate is simply a cop-out.

Still, there are a few respondents who have positive visions of moderates and they usually stress moderates’ pragmatism and their focus on local parish life. Ashley, a liberal Catholic, cites these aspects,

“I think moderate Catholics are the realists. I think moderate Catholics are the people who say it’s not perfect, but it’s pretty darn good. I think moderate Catholics are the people who, right or wrong, place the experience of being Catholic—particularly if they’re fortunate enough to be in a really vibrant parish—on par with or maybe even above the dogma of being Catholic. It’s not really so much about the Pope; it’s more about right here and now today, getting ready for

the festival, taking people to the doctor when their kids can't do it, you know, if they're old people. Real world Catholics I think are moderates. (Age 32, Lawyer)

With only a few exceptions, other Catholics tend to describe moderates in a short and succinct manner. Usually, they just identify a moderate as someone who is between a traditional and a liberal Catholic. For example, Susan, a liberal Catholic, describes moderates this way,

“Well, somebody in between, who has accepted Vatican II, and goes along with the changes, but they don't want it to get too informal or too radical.” (Age 76, retired from Department of Labor)

While brief and unembellished, these descriptions have one interesting aspect. In elaborating on the meaning of “between,” Susan identifies what she sees as the basic difference between traditionals and liberals. Susan focuses on change in her description and this was the favored theme among my respondents. Susan specifically cites Vatican II and at first I thought she was alluding solely to liturgical changes by mentioning informality, but in adding “radical,” she broadened her description to likely include other issues as well.

While Susan does not provide us with much information, we do get the idea that she sees the essential divide between traditionals and liberals as involving orientations towards change. This is the most prominent theme discussed when placing moderates in the middle. For instance, Carrie, a traditional Catholic, identifies moderates as,

Someone who is kind of in between that. Probably more open to the changes. Moderate. Probably...gosh how would I explain that. They have that traditional background and they like the traditional background but they would probably be a little more open to some of the different changes. (Age 43, Business Analyst for Insurance Company)

Bruce, a liberal Catholic, agrees,

I guess a moderate is somebody who is willing to accept some changes but still wants to keep tradition. I don't know if there is such a thing. I guess there is. (Age 61, Professor)

Jane uses the metaphor of movement,

“Someone who is just kind of going along with the way things are and not questioning. They're not going forward; they're not going backward, they're just right down the middle. (Age 73, retired Financial Officer)

While Jane, who identifies as a liberal, does not explicitly mention change, her metaphor of moving forward (liberals) or backward (traditionalists) implicitly connects to change understood historically as reform, but she starts by mentioning the issue of questioning the Church, which is another prominent theme.

Paul, a self-identified liberal, highlights the issue of openness, which he identifies with liberals, and sees this as being at odds with the “old Church.”

“I am not sure, moderates are somewhere in between. Someone accepting and yet still holds true to the old church.” (Age 34, Real Estate Agent)

Again, Paul might be suggesting a connection to change in his use of the term “old Church” to contrast with acceptance, but he does not explicitly state it.

The other division, besides orientation towards change, that is identified in describing moderates deals with the relative strictness or rigidity of rules and beliefs of the Church. My respondents identify a tension among moderates between personal interpretation of the laws of the Church vs. bowing to Church authority in the creation and enforcement of strict rules. In characterizing moderate Catholics, Kelly, who identifies herself as a liberal and her parents as traditional, reasons

“Someone who's not as strict [with regards to the Church] as my parents were. Someone kind of in between me and them. You know what I mean, right in the middle.” (Age 59, retired Banquet Server)

Denise, who identifies herself as traditional, articulates the differing responses of

moderates, traditionalists and liberals to problematic rules of the Church this way,

“Well I think a moderate would be somebody who is for the most part very committed to their religion, but has their own ideas about some things. Or maybe the moderate Catholic is one that struggles with the things they don’t agree with, whereas the traditional Catholic is going to do what the Church says, no matter what, whether they agree or disagree, and the moderate Catholic really, really struggles with that. I don’t agree with this; what am I going to do? And the liberal Catholic says, I don’t agree with this; why am I doing it? (Age 41, Paralegal)

Ron, a liberal Catholic, also points us towards people’s orientation to the authority of Church teachings and suggests that moderates differentiate between core and more peripheral teachings.

“I should think a moderate is somebody who embraces much of the tradition of the Church and really works at trying to do what the hierarchy suggests they do. They certainly believe in the essential doctrines of the Church-the important ones they really believe in. They’re a little more -well they’re probably a little more liberal about some of the more ordinary social teachings of the Church. (Age 73, retired Professor)

In conclusion, moderate Catholics often take a both/and approach to the world and seek to avoid extremes. Like traditionalists, they are “comfortable” with the Church, desire continuity with the past, and are partial to its many traditions. Like liberals, they question whether some of the Church’s rules are identical with God’s will and want the Church to take a pastoral approach towards people. In the end, moderates desire openness along with reverence and stability, but value pragmatism most of all. They are willing to accept change in the Church and hope for particular changes themselves, but they fear that an always and ever-changing Church is one lacking in identity, history, and meaning. While they believe that change in the Church will occur over time, they debate amongst themselves about which changes should occur and when. Moderates seem to lack a clear identity of their own and the absence of an active agenda leaves them fewer

means to appeal to others. Consequently, their avoidance of identification as a traditional or liberal sometimes leads to characterizations of them as “lukewarm” or of “tepid fervor” by other Catholics, but more often simply leaves other Catholics with little impression of moderates at all. Surprisingly, while there seems to be a clear role for moderates as “mediators” within the Church, moderate Catholics do not describe themselves in these terms—as bridging the gap between traditionals and liberals.

Complexifying Liberal and Traditional Catholics

My respondents are complex individuals with competing and sometimes contradictory impulses, ideas, and explanations. They adjust their ideas and notions based on the kinds and amount of information they have access to in different arenas of life, and usually acknowledge, or at least recognize, differing amounts of complexity based upon their own personal experiences with a given topic. Acknowledging that my respondents are complex, multi-faceted and sometimes contradictory individuals, I have tried to depict above their various senses of self in a way that highlights the facts most relevant to understanding the distinct religious identities of traditional, moderate and liberal Catholics.

While I believe that the descriptions above identify the crucial elements for understanding and differentiating these competing religious identities, there are some more subtle nuances to them. While respondents emphasize certain aspects of themselves in identifying as a traditional or liberal Catholic (which I highlighted above), they often reveal other elements of themselves at other times in the interview. For this reason, I argue that these identities are best seen as competing or as opposed to each other

with regard to specific issues, but are not broadly “oppositional” and certainly not “warring” identities.

Finding a Catholic Core

While liberal Catholics emphasize changing the Church and stress their openness to diversity when identifying themselves as liberal Catholics, at other points in the interview they still speak of a core of non-negotiables, or central aspects of Catholicism that they would never want to see changed. These core beliefs usually center around dogma, ritual, and/or the sacraments, and in speaking of them, liberal Catholics often articulate a traditional side to their Catholic identity.

For example, in speaking of what is central to her as a Catholic, Jane said,

“The belief in the body and blood of Christ, the liturgy, the mass, well, the basic sacrifice of the mass, the church’s general stand on peace...basically, the teachings of the Church that go back to the first couple of hundred years—what’s embodied in the Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed. There are some pretty funky things that have happened since then, but the basic things that are early beliefs before the “Fathers of the Church” began laying down rules that were often politically motivated rather than through the love of Christ.” (Age 73, retired Financial Officer)

If you recall from above, when identifying herself as a liberal Catholic, Jane stated succinctly that she identifies as a liberal because of her desire for change. Yet, in trying to clarify why liturgy and the basic sacrifice of the Mass are so important to her, Jane explains,

“Well, I was born with it. It just doesn’t change. And I have had a lot of occasion to work with people of other denominations and it’s just not the same without our liturgy. [The hierarchy] always used to tell us that we couldn’t step foot in a Protestant Church, so I have visited every one in town and had a ball. And they were all wonderful but they didn’t have a liturgy. They did have a sense of community that many of our parishes don’t have, at least the ones I’ve visited. But liturgy is just so basic to our faith.”

In reference to the centrality of creedal beliefs and especially the belief that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, Jane states,

“Well, I guess I’m a traditionalist. That is the basis of our faith, I think. I hadn’t really thought about it in those terms. It is to the Episcopalians, too. But, that’s what this whole thing is about, I think, to me anyway.”

Another liberal Catholic, Susan, also stresses the Eucharist’s centrality when she states,

“The Eucharist. You know, just the fact that we can receive Eucharist every single day. If it boils down to it and we could only receive it on Sunday, I could live with that. But, the Eucharist to me is the most important part of Mass and being Catholic.” (Age 76, retired from Department of Labor)

When I asked her which is more important—the ritualistic aspect of receiving communion or the sacramental belief that communion is actually receiving the body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation), she answered,

“I think its both. I’m not sure a lot of people understand just exactly what is going on, and I think there are some things that we aren’t meant to understand. But we have to have the faith to believe what we are told anyway.”

She went on to declare,

“I think Eucharist is the basic tenet of our whole faith. I think that’s where it comes from. I mean, Christ gave himself for us in the Eucharist...I think the Eucharist is the central point of our faith, all the way through.”

Just as Jane admits above that she’s a traditionalist in some ways, Susan, another liberal Catholic, acknowledges when speaking of the importance of transubstantiation and the Eucharist that dogma is not meant to be fully understood and must therefore be taken on faith. Even liberal Catholics have a traditional core, though they may define this core more narrowly than others.

Innovating to Invigorate the Church and Hedging at the Edges of Catholic Belief

While traditional Catholics emphasize the central importance of the mass and generally characterize themselves as resistant to change when identifying themselves as

traditional Catholics, at other points in the interview they show themselves open to innovations that invigorate the Church and help to make it more relevant to today. Also, while traditionals stress the importance of strictly following the rules of the Church, many still have particular Church issues that they personally find problematic in their own lives and the lives of their family. In speaking of these things, traditional Catholics often loosen up on strictness and articulate liberal aspects to their Catholic identity.

For example, Deirdre, who you may recall emphasized the importance of the “old ways” and the old, traditional mass when identifying herself as a traditional Catholic, shows another side of herself in responding to my question about whether she would like to see more experimentation with the mass,

“Yes I would. Not to the extreme where it changes it completely, but I think by doing different things, you learn more and you may even draw more people into the Church by changing a few things.”

Brian: And what kinds of things would you think maybe you can change and what things would you say don’t?

“I would say having more of the congregation get involved with the Mass. I mean I know we have our lectors and our cantor and someone who brings up the gifts and the readers, but someone who would ‘liven it up’ so to speak—more energetic. I mean it’s a very peaceful service, but I’ve had friends, and they go, and it’s kind of boring because it’s the same thing, you know, which is tradition, but a little more interesting—lively maybe is the word for it.” (Age 36, Teacher at a Hebrew School)

In part, Deirdre’s response may be a result of her interaction with her current pastor, Fr. Doug, who has an unorthodox but successful approach to homilies. Speaking with Barbara, another self-identified traditional Catholic at the same parish, I heard this anecdote about one of Fr. Doug’s homilies.

“Father gives a great sermon, bless his heart and he comes down off the altar and walks through the congregation and asks questions and relates something from the gospel into our everyday life and then brings it all together to centralize on the

church and almighty God's teachings and so forth. Last week it was about plugging in, and he pulled the vacuum cleaner out on the altar and he said, "Well, it won't work!" and then he plugged it in, and the little girl that was up there helping because he asked for a volunteer, and while she was running the vacuum he unplugged it and she looked at him so funny, and he said "What happened?" and she says, "It isn't plugged in," and he said "Exactly" and tied it into plugging into your religion and Church and so forth. He's wonderful, and I enjoy him very much. I have had some put me to sleep, but mostly I try to pay attention and listen if they are giving anything you can concentrate on." (Age 75, retired from Office Management)

It was clear that Barbara found Fr. Doug's style entertaining, engaging, and spiritually fulfilling. Some might say that this is true *despite* the fact that it is unconventional, but I suggest that she likes it *because* it is unconventional. Returning to Dierdre, she explains how Fr. Doug's homilies help her to connect the Church to her everyday life.

"Before Fr. Doug came we had another priest and people would leave halfway through or whatever, they wouldn't wait for him to walk back down. That doesn't happen anymore. I love that he uses props. There's been some things said negative about it, but I think the props make it more personal, more real. Everyday living and...everything out there has a part to do with God. You know last week he had tarnish remover. Then he had a duster. That's to cleanse your soul and I think the children get a lot out of it as well. It's kid friendly where before it wasn't. They would stand up at the altar at the pulpit and talk and that would be it. He gets down and walks around the congregation and he gets the parish involved."

Brian: Did it take you time to get used to it or not?

"Yeah it did. Honestly at first I thought what is he doing you know? Can't he have a homily without a pledge can or a trash can or you know a bag of M&M's, you know, whatever he brought with him? But the more I went, the less I questioned because the more I got out of it." (Age 36, Teacher at a Hebrew School)

Recognizing the value of Fr. Doug's unorthodox style after first getting over an initial resistance to change was echoed in the interviews of several other traditional Catholics. One of the real benefits of Fr. Doug's style is that it engages people. Just as important, however, Fr. Doug's unorthodox style is valuable because it is seen as "modern" and

shows that the Church can still relate to today's world. Some of the earlier statements hint at this, but Carrie, another traditional, says it even more clearly,

“Yeah [he shows] how it applies today. I think that's really important because the church is so old. And sometimes they have that reputation for being really, really, old and they just don't understand our world today. Well, surprisingly they do. What was then is now, it's just our environment and how can we take that and apply it to today's world. (Age 43, Business Analyst for Insurance Company)

Interestingly, it is not only at Fr. Doug's parish that I find traditional Catholics who are receptive to less traditional homilies. Lisa, a self-identified traditional Catholic who attends a different parish, also shows a preference for a less conventional and more outgoing approach to homilies.

“One of the priests at a nearby Church always comes down from the altar and walks right in the aisle with no notes. And he's just a born teacher, you can tell that he is. And while I don't know him really, I have a sense of him as a person as being quite quiet and retiring. Then the other priest who usually seems very outgoing always stands behind the podium and has his script there. And that sort of interested me, because of their different, you know, communication styles. But I think the mode of delivery is very important for a homily.

Brian: Out of those two deliveries, do you prefer one or the other?

“Well, yes, I think I prefer the first, the one that comes out and interacts with the congregation more.” (Age 57, Professor)

She also suggests a reasonable amount of openness to experimentation with the mass when she speaks of her mass experiences,

“I think I've done some of that, you know, where they've had more informal music and they have even thrown balloons or something like that but not recently. I can't remember very well, but I think, impressionistically, I probably liked it. Well, now that I've said throwing balloons, I'm really wondering whether I'm making it up. I meant to give the sense that it was a really festive atmosphere, a lot more casual, a lot more interaction between people who were attending the mass. And, I can see myself sort of bristling at, maybe, perhaps too much of that, um, but also liking it, too, thinking that it was a bit, um, less structured and less routinized. (Age 57, Professor)

Thus, there seems to be a certain amount of experimentation that traditional Catholics are willing and sometimes eager to see in the Mass (especially in homilies), though their acceptance of experimentation certainly has its limits.

An example of the way that traditional Catholics tend to “hedge around the edges” concerning religious belief can be seen in my interview with Barbara, a self-identified traditional. When I ask her if birth control divides traditionals and liberals, she replies,

“Probably, but I guess that’s where my liberalism comes in a bit. If you have to practice it, as opposed to abstinence, because again with our current morality level...But as far as birth control is concerned, in today’s society where both parents are mostly always working, there are so many split homes and so many single parents anymore that you really have to bend a little on that one, so anything to keep from conceiving, if you don’t want to go through with it.” (Age 75, retired from Office Management)

At other points in the interview, Barbara makes clear that she wants the Church to stand up for what it believes and not bend to the (low) moral level of the world.

“I think the world should come to the way of the church. And I think if they stand firm, and they stand strong in their convictions and they cannot be swayed, and they are determined in their convictions, they have a great deal of influence on the world. And I think the world should come back to them, this world isn’t getting any better, kiddo, and part of it is because we are losing our religious aspects. I think people should have choices, but I don’t think any of the churches should bend to the moral level, or sublevel, or whatever you want to call it, of the world today.

Yet, she contradicts herself with regard to birth control by indicating that the Church should yield to today’s reality on birth control because the alternative (increased abortion) is even worse. As a result, she prefaces that statement by saying “I guess that’s where my liberalism comes in a bit.” While traditional Catholics emphasize following the law of the Church strictly, they sometimes make exceptions “at the edges”—in cases

where they do not see the rule as central to the faith and believe it is doing more harm than good.

Conclusion: Competing, but not Warring, Visions of Church

In describing their personal understanding of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic identity, my respondents articulate two competing visions of Church. The vision they ascribe to traditional Catholics highlights the importance of individuals obeying the rules of the Church and seeks to limit change in the Church. By remaining coherent and unchanging, the Church can thus provide stability and enduring truth to both individual members and the larger society during times of change. The alternative vision ascribed to liberal Catholics emphasizes instead a healthy questioning of Church authorities and a desire to change the Church to create an improved Catholicism, one that is true to individuals' personal experiences in the larger society. This vision hopes that, by changing, the Church will come to realize that rules are less important in our ever-changing world than speaking and, especially, acting prophetically on issues of justice. Moderates, finally, see themselves as a mix of traditional and liberal and argue that these two visions are not always mutually exclusive.

As I noted earlier when highlighting each of the identities, most Catholics describe "opposing" religious identities in relatively neutral or positive, rather than expressly negative, terms. While they clearly view these competing identities as opposed to each other on particular issues, they never speak of "the other" as an "enemy," and rarely speak of them in especially vitriolic terms. While they clearly have disagreements with each other, my "liberal" and "traditional" respondents do not seem to be engaged in a religious war with one another.

Perhaps Catholics are not at “war” with each other, but do traditional Catholics at least see themselves as sharing greater common ground with traditionalists of other faiths rather than with their liberal co-religionists (and vice versa)? This depends upon what is meant by common ground. (See Table 2.3)

TABLE 2.3: MEASURING SYMBOLIC BOUNDARIES

If traditional:

Do you feel you have more in common in some ways with traditionalist Protestants than with liberal Catholics? (In what ways and why?)

If liberal:

Do you feel you have more in common in some ways with liberal Protestants than with traditional Catholics? (In what ways and why?)

More in common 'in some ways'	Yes:	52%
with "similar" Protestants	No:	48%

If forced to choose, who would you say you have more in common with overall-

If traditional:

traditionalist Protestants or liberal Catholics?

If liberal:

Liberal Protestants or traditional Catholics?

	"Similar" Protestant	30%
More in common with 'overall':	"Opposite" Catholic	70%

If moderate:

Would you say that you lean 'traditional' or lean 'liberal'?

(then ask corresponding traditional or liberal questions about commonalities)

More in common 'in some ways'	Yes:	53%
with "similar" Protestant	No:	47%
	"Similar" Protestant	33%
More in common with 'overall':	"Opposite" Catholic	67%

Just over half of traditional and liberal Catholics see themselves as having more in common with their counterparts in Protestantism on at least some specific issues, yet

almost half of traditional and liberal Catholics disagree that they have more in common even “in some ways” with their Protestant counterparts than with Catholics of the “opposite” identity. Furthermore, if forced to choose who they have more in common with *overall*, 70% of traditional and liberal Catholics choose each other over their ideologically similar Protestant counterparts. Interestingly, these percentages hardly change if I include the responses of moderate Catholics.⁷ Surprisingly, traditional and liberal Catholics, in comparison to moderate Catholics, do not seem to be any more estranged from their Catholic fellow-travelers or any more sympathetic to like-minded Protestants.

Why do most Catholics see themselves as having more in common with each other, than with Protestants holding a similar identity? There are several reasons. Some illustrate continuing differences or religious boundaries with Protestants, whereas others focus on what connects and unifies traditional and liberal Catholics. Highlighting continued distrust of Protestants, some of my Catholic respondents emphasize historically-rooted antagonisms. For example, George, an 84 year-old moderate Catholic, recounts,

“I remember the traditional Protestants from way back. You don’t know how it was back in 1924 and ’25 when the Ku Klux Klan was big here and marched down the street right in front of my house when I was about five years old. Many of them were traditional non-Catholics, but they certainly weren’t very kind. Catholics in the twenties were considered to be dirt you know! They marched past our house and we went to the door, my mother and I, and they said, ‘Listen old lady, you get back inside. You haven’t got any business out here watching us.’ They had their hoods on and you couldn’t tell who they were. Catholics have come a long way since 1924. Maybe we’re not there yet, but we’re a lot farther than we were when 45% of the people here belonged to the Klan. The traditional non-Catholics certainly weren’t friendly to Catholics back in the 20’s and 30’s, and I still don’t trust them cause I still think they’re anti-Catholic. They

⁷ First, I asked them which way they leaned- traditional or liberal? Based on this answer, I then worded the question using either the liberal or traditional question wording for moderates.

probably are, but they're not as anti-Catholic now as they were years ago.”(Age 84, retired Doctor)

Overall, though, responses like that of George, with memories of anti-Catholic animosity, were in the minority.

In more cases, my respondents simply report knowing very little about Protestants rather than focusing on Protestants' historic antagonism to Catholics. For example, when I ask Kathy, a traditional Catholic, if she feels she has more in common, in some ways, with traditionalist Protestants than with liberal Catholics, she replies,

“I don't know if I can answer that really, because I still don't really know a lot about Protestants. I really don't. So, just from that, I would say, no. I would feel I could definitely relate more to a liberal Catholic.”(Age 37, stay-at-home mom)

While Catholics interact with Protestants at work and in other social arenas, they rarely interact with them on a religious basis. As a result, Catholics often lack a basic understanding of the diversity of Protestant religious beliefs and this lack of knowledge provides ample room for misperception. This seems especially true of traditional Catholics, but can be found among some liberal Catholics as well. For example, Kelly, a liberal Catholic, states,

“I don't think I have anything in common with Protestants. Plus, when my (formerly Protestant) husband would talk about [his experiences] as a kid, I didn't have anything in common with that. Nothing. I didn't believe the way he did. No way shape or form. They used to handle snakes and stuff like that. And I just thought, ‘Boy that's not the thing to do.’”(Age 59, retired Banquet Server)

Clearly Kelly's understanding of Protestantism is deficient if her knowledge is limited to experiences from her converted husband's youth, but that is the basis for her feelings.

Similarly, Carol indicates a deficiency in knowledge and a subsequent negative perception of Protestants when she says,

“I can’t determine what some of my Protestant friends believe. I mean some of them change churches every time the wind blows.”(Age 73, Retired Professor)

As for those who said that they were more similar to Protestants ‘in some ways’ but then chose other Catholics as having more in common overall, Shannon is perhaps emblematic. Here, Shannon emphasizes her continued interaction with Catholics and Catholicism as a whole in explaining why she feels more connected to traditional Catholics overall. She says,

“Well liberal Protestants have implemented some of these changes that I think the Catholic Church should consider or should discuss openly. So, in that sense, they approve of these things in their church, and so we have more in common with the way we think a church should be run, but, you know, as general culture goes and background, I may have more in common with traditional Catholics because I was raised to go to mass every Sunday and I went to Catholic schools—things like that. So culturally, just in life experience, I would probably have to go with traditional Catholics. I think intellectually I would go with the other way, but I think the whole kind of cultural background and everything that goes with being Catholic in a certain environment has a lot of weight.” (Age 34, Librarian)

While recognizing the similarities she shares with liberal Protestants, Shannon feels that her consistent interactions with other Catholics trump the intellectual orientation she shares with liberal Protestants. Similarly, Bruce states,

“Yeah, I probably feel I have more in common in some ways with liberal Protestants because we support similar issues on social issues. They have married priests and women priests. So, it must be other issues that I have more in common with them, too. If I was forced to choose, though, I would probably say I have more in common with traditional Catholics because there is always the mass.”(Age 61, Professor)

Thus, the consistent interactions that come with a common mass and a common system of ritual (along with Catholic institutions such as schools) serve as a continuing source of commonality for traditional and liberal Catholics.

Another unifying factor for traditional and liberal Catholics is that most of my respondents see the differences between traditional and liberal Catholics as generally healthy for the Church (see table 2.4 below). While this is especially true of liberal

TABLE 2.4: ARE DIFFERENCES HEALTHY OR DESTRUCTIVE?

Do you feel that the differences between traditionals and liberals are destructive of the American Catholic Church or are such differences a healthy thing? (Why?)

	All Respondents	Traditionals	Liberals
Generally Healthy*	67%	43%	73%
Both Healthy and Destructive	22%	29%	20%
Generally Destructive	11%	29%	7%
(N)	(46)	(7)	(15)

*Note: This includes respondents who answered that these differences were generally healthy, but then mentioned the potential for these differences to be destructive if they became too extreme.

Catholics, whose religious identity is predicated on accepting diverse viewpoints, it also holds true (though less so) for my traditional Catholic respondents. While 73% of liberal Catholics who spoke of the consequences of differences between traditionals and liberals in their interview branded such differences as healthy, 43% of traditionals termed them healthy and an additional 29% argued that these differences were healthy in some respects, but destructive in others. Only 29% of traditional Catholics interviewed felt that these differences were generally destructive (compared to 7% of liberal Catholics).

My respondents articulate several different reasons for why differences between traditional and liberal Catholics are generally healthy. For some, the differences are healthy because they allow the Church to be more inclusive and to accommodate more people. For example, Ashley, a liberal Catholic, explains

“I think they are healthy because I think that the fundamental reason that people stop coming to the church and they disassociate themselves is because they feel

unwelcome in some way. I think that to the extent that there is room for discord and differing viewpoints I think the chances for people feeling unwelcome are reduced because there is no one right way. The priest thinks birth control was wrong, well that's ok, it's not like you can't come if you are using it. The church may think that being homosexual is not the best but it's not that you can't come if you are homosexual. I think that to the extent that it opens the doors to people who are different or maybe don't fit within the confines of church doctrine or allows that those people are ok too; I think it's a good thing." (Age 32, Lawyer)

Also emphasizing diversity, Rosie, a moderate Catholic, highlights the importance of dialogue and common ground and sees these divisions in the Church as creating discussions and opportunities to consider what we really want the Church to be.

"I think it's probably a healthy thing. It keeps people talking. Keeps people deciding about what they want the church to be. And can we meet, find any common ground to meet on?" (Age 48, Director of Nursing)

Others also argue that conflict, in limited amounts, is both necessary and a source of growth in the Church. For example, Joan, who identifies as a moderate, states,

"Well, I think that the differences are healthy. I think that when there is conflict, you always lose somebody, but I think it is healthy. It's just like in the family. You may not like conflict, but you grow from that conflict." (Age 61, Housewife)

Similarly, Kevin, another self-identified moderate, declares,

"I think it's healthy. Let's say that everybody was traditionalist, I just think of my hometown church. Not that it's bad, it's really not negative at all, it's just the same every time, it's a routine, it becomes something you just do. And so I think just like any type of organization or any type of club or work, I've even heard conflict in a relationship is a good thing. There's got to be conflict somewhere. Too much is bad, but there's got to be a proper amount. So I think those conflicts in the Church are good because they bring up issues, they wake you up, they make you think and maybe even people learn and get something out of it." (Age 27, Television Broadcaster)

According to some respondents, such conflicts create growth because each identity, or group, has a "role" to play in the Church. The role of traditional Catholics is to root the Church in its traditions and history. They provide stability in the Church.

Liberal Catholics, on the other hand, are seen as agents of change. They continually call

the Church to reevaluate the way it thinks and acts and challenge the Church to look beyond its borders in order to consider new options and new movements of the spirit. These Catholics tend to see the roles of traditional and liberal Catholics as complementary and, consequently, consider the differences between them as healthy for the Church because they can learn from one another. Denise explains,

“You can watch a traditional Catholic, for instance, and think ‘okay, I’m going to make an effort to be more like that. I’m going to make an effort to get to mass more often...’ And that’s a good thing. And a traditional Catholic might look at a liberal Catholic and say, ‘I’m going to make an effort not to be so rigid-to try and understand that point of view-not necessarily agree with it, but try to understand it.’” (Age 41, Paralegal)

At the very least, my respondents argue that these different groups form countervailing forces that help to balance each other out. As Bob states

“Well, liberals of course to me, the way I’m explaining it are ones that want to jump at change as things come along. Traditionals are the ones that don’t want to change without thinking it through. And I’ll give credit to the fact that some change is good and necessary. So if over here they’re too stubborn to change and over here they’re too willing to change without much thought, that’s bad. The good of course, is the traditionalist that says, ‘Let’s look at it seriously.’ And the liberal that says, ‘Let’s look at it seriously.’ And I think that way it can come up with some good. (Age 65, retired Electrical Engineer)

Some respondents combine both elements, inclusivity and complementarity, in explaining why Catholic divisions are a healthy thing. For example, Terry suggests that the differences are healthy because,

“We need the liberal people for the support of the church, and I think if we were to be too strict and traditional we would drive some of those people away, and everybody knows we need the support of everyone we can get. Of course that’s just talking about the financial end of it, but I think some good ideas come out of liberal minds, you know? And maybe the liberals can have enough pressure to change some of the things that I and other people don’t think have to be written in stone, they can be a little bit more modern ideas brought in...[On the other hand,] traditionals are sort of the backbone of the church, that’s the stiffener, and I think we need a little bit of that, and I think maybe those people keep the liberals from straying too far liberal.” (Age 67, Pharmacist)

My respondents often caution, however, that if the differences become too extreme, then they could become destructive of the Church.

“I can see how if it’s taken to extreme that it can certainly cause much consternation and can cause some problems in the Catholic Church.” (Age 34, State Trooper)

Finally, in a sense, many of my respondents see these countervailing forces at work in themselves as well. In choosing an identity for themselves, Catholics consider their own images of traditionalists, moderates and liberals and self-consciously contrast these identities with their personal religious self-understanding. In contrasting their self-concept with the ideal-typical images of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics, however, they recognize that different parts of themselves fit into each category. While this is obviously true of moderate Catholics, it is true of liberal Catholics when they speak of valuing the rootedness and tradition-oriented nature of the Church, while recognizing that this very trait is often the source of their frustration when seeking change in the Church.⁸ It is also true of traditional Catholics, when they enjoy Masses invigorated by non-traditional homilies or find particular religious issues personally frustrating or a source of difficulty for family and friends and are forced to wrestle with an accommodation of the issue.

While most of my respondents do not vocalize such self-reflection during the interview, some do. For example, Debbie provides insight into her thought process as she goes along. In response to my forced-choice question on Catholic identity, Debbie initially says,

⁸ Paul provides an example of this when he says, “I enjoy some of the conservative aspects, and yet I consider myself more liberal. And yet, it’s some of the more conservative views that I find quite frustrating at the same time.” (Age 34, Real Estate Agent)

“I am a traditional Catholic. I don’t like things to change much. That would probably be the biggest thing. I grew up in a traditional church. I’m used to things a certain way, and that’s what I like about Catholicism is that it really doesn’t change all that much.” (Age 36, Special Events Coordinator)

When I ask her what comes to mind when she imagines a traditional Catholic, she replies,

“Well, someone certainly more devoted and dedicated than I am. I’d say my parents. Very faithful about praying, about their religion, about living what they learn, about going to church every week, about us having religious education, continuing to practice, and continuing to be so faithful and not have doubts. So, am I really traditional? Maybe not, you know, maybe I’m just kind of barely there, but definitely my parents, traditional.”

I go on to ask what comes to mind when she imagines a liberal Catholic, and she answers,

“Oh, probably someone who, oh gosh, maybe more like me. I guess people who interpret the rules the way they want to (laughs), follow what they want to, and don’t follow what they don’t want to. Maybe who are more open to change and willing to go to some more non-traditional type services where you stand around the altar or where you shout Hallelujah, or whatever, I don’t know. I’ve really never been to some of those kinds of masses, but people maybe who are more drawn to change and progressing and that.”

Finally, I ask, “And what comes to mind when you imagine a moderate Catholic?”

Debbie responds,

Moderate. Well maybe that’s what I am, I really don’t know. I think moderate is just falling in between. I think they, maybe that’s really more me, that they’re willing to go along with it because it’s something they grew up with. Maybe someone whose willing to accept change if the church tells you to. Um, I guess just kind of right in the middle there, liking some of the traditions, yet being able to be flexible. Maybe I’m more moderate. Was that one of your choices? Yeah, I’m going to move myself to that category.

While Debbie is unusual in that she changes her mind as she goes, finally settling on moderate, her interview is instructive in that it reveals her decision-making process as she articulates it verbally. Debbie clearly is able to see aspects of herself that fit into each of the competing identities. As some of my quotes depicting the nuances involved in

religious identity show, this ability to identify with “opposing” identities is true not only of moderates but also of traditionals and liberals.

As I have shown, Catholics provide consistent reasons for identifying as a traditional, moderate, or liberal. Yet, they also talk about aspects of themselves that fit within other identities as well. In the end, they do not choose their identity haphazardly but self-consciously reflect upon their own sense of self as a religious individual and then choose the identity that best fits their religious self-understanding. This is why I suggest that traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic identities are much like ideal types with which individuals identify. In accessing their cognitive map of Catholicism, Catholics place others (and also themselves) into various categories labeled traditional, moderate, and liberal, recognizing that most people do not fit perfectly into any one category. But where do these images of traditionals and liberals come from? How do my respondents develop these ideal types? How do they construct their cognitive map of Catholicism? These are all questions I will consider in my next chapter.

In this chapter, I have shown that ordinary Catholics are aware of contrasting religious sensibilities in describing themselves and other Catholics but do not see themselves as being “at war” with each other. Rather, they feel closely connected to each other as Catholics. In fact, far from decrying traditional and liberal Catholics as sources of division and combativeness, most Catholics in my interviews describe the differences between traditional and liberal Catholics as ‘a healthy thing’ for the Church, although they worry a bit about the differences becoming too large. In speaking of traditionals, moderates, and liberals, ordinary Catholics attest to the existence of competing, but certainly not warring, religious identities within contemporary American Catholicism.

Chapter 3- Constructing Cognitive Maps:

Catholics as Cultural Agents

As I discussed in the previous chapter, in accessing their cognitive map of American Catholicism, Catholic parishioners self-reflectively contrast images of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics and then locate themselves by selecting the identity that best fits their current religious self-understanding. But where do these images (or identities) come from? In contrast to denominational identities, such as Catholic or Methodist, which are plainly rooted in church membership and religious socialization within that denomination, it is not obvious where traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic identities originate within U.S. culture. Furthermore, whether (or how) Catholics are socialized into these intra-denominational identities is even less clear.

In his study of the restructuring of religious divisions, Wuthnow (1989) stressed the emergence since WWII of religious organizations that are non-denominational in nature, which he termed “special purpose groups.” He highlighted the importance of such groups in institutionalizing intra-denominational conflict and in linking such conflict to U.S. politics. Thus, groups such as the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, and the Family Research Council have arisen to combat what “religious conservatives” see as government intrusion into the family and to advance their own “Christian family” agenda. On the other side, groups such as People for the American Way, Bread for the World, and Americans for the Separation of Church and State have staked out the positions of “religious liberals.” Interestingly, most of the organizations that Wuthnow mentioned are overwhelmingly comprised of Protestants and some are

exclusively Protestant. Although Wuthnow does not mention them, I will discuss below that there exist a number of specifically Catholic special purpose groups as well.

Christian Smith (1998), in his examination of Protestant religious identities, argued that religious identities are created by religious entrepreneurs and religious movements. Smith argued that the (trans-denominational) Protestant identities of “Evangelical,” “Fundamentalist,” “Mainline,” and “Liberal” Protestant have been created by religious movements, which have carved out “identity-spaces” and created sub-cultural communities that support these identities. In his book on Evangelicalism, Smith specifically pointed to the importance of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in fashioning an “Evangelical” identity. With its emergence in 1942, Smith argued that the NAE developed as an umbrella group for Evangelical religious actors and helped to create and develop the modern religious identity of Evangelical Protestantism over the next decade and a half.

Smith’s work indicated that trans-denominational religious movement organizations have created religious identities that cross denominational boundaries within Protestantism, but do not transcend boundaries of faith tradition—i.e., from Protestantism to Catholicism. Perhaps the cultural barriers associated with Protestants’ historic opposition to Catholicism keep most Protestants (and Catholics) from wanting to share a common religious identity. On the other hand, while the institutional Catholic Church has become somewhat more accepting of inter-denominational dialogue and interaction recently, its long history of animosity towards religious competitors and its extremely hierarchical organization are unlikely to foster the emergence and development of trans-denominational organizations or to provide them with easy access to Catholic

parishioners. Regardless, as I noted in the previous chapter, symbolic boundaries between Catholics and Protestants continue to exist within the minds and lives of ordinary Catholics, as many Catholics acknowledge knowing very little about Protestants because of a lack of interaction with them on a religious level and therefore consider them “the unknown other.” Still, Smith’s theory of the restructuring of religious identity provides a useful starting point for considering the creation, institutionalization, and socialization of Catholic intra-denominational identities.

Traditional and Liberal Catholic Movement Organizations and Media

Since religious identifications such as “Methodist” or “Southern Baptist” are rooted in denominational histories, movements, and organizations and the “Evangelical” identification has been created and institutionalized in Evangelical religious movement organizations, it seems reasonable to examine whether “traditional,” “moderate,” and “liberal” Catholic identities are institutionalized in Catholic organizations of individuals holding these perspectives. A number of scholars of religion have, in fact, highlighted such traditional and liberal Catholic organizations in examining contemporary divisions among Catholics (Dillon 1999, Weaver 1999, Weaver and Appleby, 1995).

According to Weaver and Appleby (1995), many organizations within the Catholic community (e.g. Catholics United for the Faith, Women for Faith and Family, the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, etc.) support and expound a traditionalist perspective, even though members of these groups may dislike added labels like “traditional” and may assert themselves to be just plain Catholics. In making this claim, traditional Catholics often emphasize that those who dissent and disagree with the Church are “not really Catholic.” Thus, doctrinal orthodoxy and submission to Church authority

are of central importance to these individuals and groups. Still, in the current situation, members of these groups often find it necessary to distinguish themselves from Catholics who hold dissenting views, and most prefer to be called traditional or orthodox Catholics as opposed to such trans-denominational labels as fundamentalists or conservatives (Weaver and Appleby, 1995, p. x). Weaver and Appleby also suggest that these traditionalist organizations have helped to create and develop networks of like-minded individuals, as well as print and web media articulating a traditional Catholic viewpoint. In addition to their own publications, these organizations and their members support a variety of periodicals such as The Wanderer and the National Catholic Register.

A primary purpose of these traditional Catholic organizations (most of which have been created in just the past few decades) is to “defend the faith” and promote the religious teaching authority of the Catholic Church. For example, Catholics United for the Faith (CUF, <http://www.cuf.org/>) was initially founded in 1968 to counter public dissent concerning Pope Paul VI’s encyclical on birth control, “*Humanae Vitae*.” CUF promotes itself as

“A lay apostolate founded in 1968 to support, defend, and advance the efforts of the Teaching Church. CUF members support a solid, faithful, Catholic apostolate whose sole purpose is to help build-up the Church.”

Similarly, Women for Faith and Family (<http://www.wf-f.org/>) began in 1984 as a consequence of traditional Catholics’ apprehension over a proposed pastoral letter on the subject of “women’s concerns.” The group states that its purposes are

“to assist orthodox Catholic women in their effort to provide witness to their faith, both to their families and to the world; to aid women in their efforts to deepen their understanding of the Catholic Faith; to aid faithful Catholic women in their desire for fellowship with others who share their faith and commitment; and to serve as a channel through which questions from Catholic women seeking guidance or information can be directed.”

Likewise, the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars (<http://www.catholicscholars.org/>), founded in 1977, was created in reaction to prominent Catholic intellectuals dissenting from Church teaching. The Fellowship describes itself as “an association of Catholic scholars in various disciplines who see their intellectual work as a service they owe to God” and states that it “was founded primarily to give the corporate witness of scholars to the truth of the Catholic faith.”

Similarly, there are numerous organizations (e.g. Call to Action, Dignity/USA, Catholics For a Free Choice, etc.) that support a liberal Catholic viewpoint (Dillon 1999, Weaver 1999). Again, there is sometimes disagreement among their members over the appropriate moniker to use, with some groups calling themselves progressive or leftist, rather than liberal (Weaver, 1999). Even so, among these persons and organizations there is a constant desire for the Church to change and relate more positively with the modern world, along with repeated references to the importance of personal conscience as opposed to Church authority (Dillon 1999). These basic orientations are supported by a general discourse of egalitarianism and the subsequent highlighting of particular “problems” within the Church (e.g., hierarchical power, male-only ordination, compulsory celibacy, etc.). Liberal organizations have also established networks of like-minded Catholics and have produced print materials, such as *Call to Action News* or *Church Watch* (a quarterly progress report on reform in the Catholic Church), which embody their perspective. *America* magazine, produced by the Jesuits, is also read by many liberal Catholics, as is the weekly *National Catholic Reporter*.

A primary purpose of these liberal Catholic groups is “to further the reform” of the Catholic Church, and “to bring about a world of justice and peace” (<http://www.cta->

usa.org/COR.html). For example, Call to Action (CTA, <http://www.cta-usa.org/>) was founded in 1978 following a conference of the same name in 1976. The group identifies itself as:

“An independent national organization of over 25,000 people and 40 local organizations. CTA believes that the Spirit of God is at work in the whole church, not just in its appointed leaders. The entire Catholic Church has the obligation of responding to the needs of the world and taking initiative in programs of peace and justice.”

CTA promotes its vision of a progressive, engaged Catholicism via annual conferences, publications, networks of regional groups, and joint programs with other liberal Catholic organizations. Similarly, Dignity/USA (<http://www.dignityusa.org/>) began in 1969 and became a national organization in 1973. Dignity/USA “advocates for change in the Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality; provides educational materials, speakers, and other resources to Catholic parishes, gay ministries, and other interested groups; maintains ongoing dialogue with Catholic bishops and other Church leaders; represents gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Catholics in the media; and presents positive testimony from a Catholic perspective on civil rights legislation.” Likewise, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC, <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/>), was founded by three New York women in 1973 as a lobbying group. Early on, the group generated publicity through dramatic acts. For example, one of its founders “crowned herself Pope on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City on the first anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision” suggesting that “if women were integrated in the church, the rules about sexuality and reproduction would probably be very different.” In 1979, CFFC changed its organizational status to that of a tax exempt educational organization rather than a

lobbying group but continued to highlight that Catholics are neither monolithic in their beliefs regarding abortion, nor in their support of the Church hierarchy.

Table 3.1: Some Catholic Religious Movement Groups, Periodicals, Etc.

Organizations and Religious Orders	Periodicals and Media Personalities
LIBERAL	
Call to Action	The National Catholic Reporter
Catholics for a Free Choice	America
Womanchurch	Churchwatch
Voice of the Faithful	Xavier Rynne
Jesuits	
TRADITIONAL	
Catholics United for the Faith	The National Catholic Register
Women for Faith and Family	Eternal Word Television Network
The Blue Army of Mary	The Wanderer
Catholics United for Life	Mother Angelica
Catholics United for Christ	
Lambs of Christ	
Franciscan University of Steubenville	
National Assembly of Religious Women	
Society of St. Pius X	
Legionaries of Christ	
Opus Dei	
MODERATE OR NONE OF THE ABOVE	
Franciscans	Today's Catholic
	Our Sunday Visitor

*I added the following items because I did not see them as connected to traditional or liberal religious movements. Thus, I wondered, "Would people view them as moderate, none of the above, or what?"

In preparing for my interviews, I investigated many of the groups mentioned by Weaver, Dillon and others via their web sites and written communications, as well as media accounts. In Table 3.1, I list more than twenty different groups, periodicals, or personalities associated with traditional or liberal Catholics about which I asked questions during my interviews. While most of these are self-consciously connected to

religious movements, a few of the groups and periodicals are not. Still, they are all associated with or connected to these identities in some manner and may serve to help create and institutionalize Catholic identity-spaces. I include questions regarding these movement-oriented groups, periodicals and persons in my interviews in order to better understand their role in shaping the religious identity of ordinary Catholics.

While investigating and learning about such groups, I sometimes found nuanced statements by members that recognized and allowed for amicable disagreement between traditional and liberal Catholics, but just as often, I found statements that better fit Hunter's notion of a culture war, with religious opponents cast as opposing combatants. In studying these groups, I also found, as Weaver suggested, that membership in these various organizations is rather small and readership of even their largest periodicals is limited.

Religious Movement Organizations and Catholic Identity Formation

If movement organizations help create religious identities as cultural constructs, why are everyday traditional and liberal Catholics not more antagonistic in speaking of each other? What role do Catholic religious movements play in actually developing individual Catholics' religious identity? Do ordinary parishioners connect their own religious identity to these traditional and liberal Catholic religious movements and movement organizations?

To answer these questions, I need to specify what it means to say that movements are "connected" to identities. There are several different ways to theorize a connection between religious movement organizations and religious identities. Below, I propose three possible scenarios, which differ in terms of how loosely- or tightly-coupled special

purpose groups and religious movement organizations are to the creation and socialization of religious identity.

Smith (Smith et al. 1998) neglected to adjudicate between such competing scenarios because he failed to elaborate a causal model of identity formation. Smith describes the creation of an Evangelical subcultural community and identity by the National Association of Evangelicals and other groups but did not detail how this was accomplished. Instead, he simply noted that the movement did not transform individuals into Evangelicals overnight, nor did it replace denominational identities. Instead, what the Evangelical movement accomplished was

“to open up a ‘space’ between fundamentalism and liberalism in the field of religious collective identity; give that space a name; articulate and promote a resonant vision of faith and practice that players in the religious field came to associate with that name and identity-space; and invite a variety of religious players to move into that space to participate in the ‘identity-work’ and mission being accomplished there.”

Consequently, it is impossible to say exactly what scenario of identity formation Smith had in mind in connecting the Evangelical religious movement to Evangelical identity formation. Instead, he provided conceptual tools for considering collective religious identity and implied that these identities are culturally constructed by movement organizations and elite actors.

Unfortunately, while Smith’s notion seems both reasonable and plausible, he provides us with little systematic evidence to prove the importance of movement entrepreneurs. Specifically, he neither ascertains whether Evangelical respondents are aware of the NAE’s existence, nor specifies exactly how individuals came to embrace the Evangelical identity. Consequently, it is not clear if Evangelical identity is a result of identification with a long-term community within which one is socialized, if it is simply a

label used as a heuristic to navigate a complex religious field, or perhaps something else entirely. Smith also fails to specify how religious entrepreneurs “sell” religious identities to religious consumers. Put another way, do people self-select their religious identity from a marketplace full of pre-constructed identities or are they socialized by religious movements into these identities? Alternatively, do they construct their own religious identity out of personal interactions, and if so, how do such identities get labeled? How are they able to remain stable across time and place?

Understanding identity formation more fully is crucial for causal arguments regarding social change and for understanding the consequences of such identities’ for outcomes like education and politics (including whether these identities are causally prior to such outcomes). In examining the creation, socialization, and institutionalization of religious identities, one must consider the individual level of socialization, but also the broader societal/cultural level where movement organizations create and institutionalize identities in interaction with the media and other opinion leaders.

At the individual level, there can either be direct socialization or self-selection/self-socialization into a religious identity. Theories of religious socialization that highlight childhood religious instruction and behavior are rooted in theories of direct socialization. Such theories argue that religious identities are instilled by direct personal interaction with religious organizations and actors and these identities remain relatively stable over the life course. Consequently, religious identities are a causal source not only of differing religious behaviors but of political and educational outcomes as well. Theories of self-selection and self-socialization, on the other hand, focus on the agency of individuals in choosing, or selecting, their religious identity. Such theories assume a

certain amount of variability in religious identity over the life course, but the amount of such variability can differ significantly. Of course, these different theories of socialization are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, for religious formation of converts, self-selection is followed by direct socialization. As a result, theories involving self-selection do not remove the possibility of religious identity as a future cause of behaviors but are more skeptical of that possibility, especially when causality extends beyond religion into other domains.

At the broader societal level, identities may be viewed as collective constructs. This suggests that movements will maintain maximum control over an identity, when movement organizations are able to monopolize this as a cultural construct. When religious identification (and identity) is a result of direct socialization by movement organizations, then control over the identity by the movement is assured. Similarly, when religious identification is a result of self-selected membership in a movement organization, even if one's religious identity was formed elsewhere, then that collective identity (or rather collective identification) can be considered a creation of movement organizations and movement elites. As a result, the meanings associated with that identification will remain largely under the control of these organizations and elites. When religious identification, however, is not limited to those who are members of movement organizations and actually includes many who are not even acquainted with movements and movement organizations, then regardless of whether the labels are "created" by movements or not, movement organizations will not retain control over what these labels mean. At most, movement organizations in this situation will

“influence” the meaning of religious identities via interaction with the media and opinion leaders.

Below are three possible scenarios I will consider concerning Catholic religious identity formation:

- (1) Traditional and liberal Catholic movement organizations are consciously recognized by Catholics as the source of their religious identity. Individual Catholics’ identify these groups as the source of their identity because these groups engage in identity formation via direct socialization.
- (2) Traditional and liberal Catholic movement organizations do not directly socialize members into their religious identity, but create and sustain religious identities by providing institutional and organizational “spaces” into which like-minded individuals can self-select. Thus, religious identification is a response to interaction with and self-selection (and self-socialization) into a religious movement with which one is acquainted. Movement organizations and elites, however, maintain control over the meanings of these identifications by providing the “space” in which these identities are enacted.
- (3) Traditional and liberal Catholic movement organizations do not socialize individuals into their religious identity. Nor, when identifying as a traditional or liberal Catholic, are most people self-selecting into a religious movement with which they are acquainted. Instead, religious identification merely reflects people’s self-understood position vis-à-vis recognized differences within the larger religious community. As a result, movement organizations do not control the “meaning” of religious identities. Instead, special purpose

groups and religious movement organizations are important insofar as they highlight, institutionalize, and/or generate acknowledgement of movement “issues” in the broader community through movement-oriented conflict.

In the first scenario, movement organizations initially create or develop a unique religious identity. They then transfer that identity’s meaning and values, authoritatively, to individuals via daily communications and interactions. If movement groups are the key socializing agents of religious individuals, then these groups will exert and maintain a maximum amount of control over religious identities. Direct socialization would allow movement organizations to be seen as the source of religious identity formation, and this would suggest that religious movement organizations should be considered primary causal sources in models of religious and social change.

Do traditional and liberal Catholic organizations directly socialize ordinary Catholics into their religious identity? No. In my interviews, I inquire as to why my respondents identify as traditional, moderate and liberal Catholics and also ask where they get their images of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics. In response, not a single parishioner mentioned traditional or liberal Catholic organizations or movements as a source of their religious identity or even as a source of their images of these identities. Thus, my traditional and liberal Catholic respondents’ self-understandings of their religious identities eliminate the first scenario above as plausible for Catholics.

If these organizations do not directly socialize individuals into their religious identity, perhaps they at least provide institutional space within which these identities are enacted. In scenario two, movement organizations provide public identities, or common labels of identification, for individuals holding particular issue positions and moral

outlooks. While religious sensibilities and beliefs are often formed prior to interaction with special purpose groups or movement organizations, these religious beliefs soon lead to membership in or interaction with movement or special purpose groups and subsequent activities within the religious movement lead to religious identification with that movement. Thus, religious identification with a movement identity is an identifier of self-selection, or self-socialization, into a religious movement with which one is acquainted.

My traditional and liberal Catholic respondents' failure to voluntarily mention movement organizations should make us more skeptical of scenario two, but it is not conclusive evidence of its inadequacy. Perhaps my respondents fail initially to associate identities with organizations because they focus instead on the pre-movement formation of their beliefs. If so, then they are simply not thinking of movement organizations at that moment. Yet, movement organizations and special purpose groups might still be important. To more directly investigate the importance of such organizations and periodicals, I asked if my respondents know (by name) any organizations or periodicals that they associate with traditional or liberal Catholics. A list of all the organizations they associated with traditional or liberal Catholics can be found in Table 3.2 below.

I divided the groups named by my respondents into movement-oriented (italicized) and non-movement-oriented groups. Of the non-movement groups, some are social clubs (Knights of Columbus, Daughters of Isabella, Holy Name Society, Ancient Order of Hibernians), others are prayer-based groups or retreats (Altar Societies, Sodalities, Rosary Societies, Cursillo Retreats, Medjugorje Pilgrimage Group), a few are education or age-based groups (Catholic Youth Organization, Newman Club) and a final

set are composed of various Catholic charitable organizations (St. Vincent DePaul Society, Catholic Social Services, Catholic Charities). Note that some of these non-italicized groups are listed in both the traditional and liberal column.

TABLE 3.2: TRADITIONAL AND LIBERAL CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS

Can you think of any Catholic organizations which you would associate with traditional Catholics? (Could you list them for me?)

Any that you would associate with liberal Catholics? (Could you list these for me?)

Traditional Groups Named:	Liberal Groups Named:
<i>Blue Army</i>	<i>Call to Action</i>
<i>Legion of Mary</i>	<i>Catholics for a Free Choice</i>
<i>Eucharistic League</i>	<i>National Catholic Reporter</i>
<i>Opus Dei</i>	<i>Voice of the Faithful</i>
<i>Catholics United for the Faith</i>	<i>Catholic Worker</i>
<i>Society of Pius X</i>	<i>Local Support Group for Homosexual Catholics</i>
<i>Local Crisis Pregnancy Centers</i>	<i>Local Peace and Justice Committees</i>
<i>Local Home for Unwed Mothers</i>	
Knights of Columbus	Knights of Columbus
Daughters of Isabella	Cursillo Retreat
Holy Name Society	Medjugorje Pilgrimage Group
Ancient Order of Hibernians	Catholic Youth Organization
Altar Society	Newman Club
Sodality	St. Vincent DePaul
Rosary Society	Catholic Social Services
Catholic Youth Organization	
Catholic Social Services	
St. Vincent DePaul Society	
Catholic Charities	

Note: Italicized groups are considered movement-oriented groups

These groups listed in both columns were identified by some individuals as traditional and by others as liberal. Thus, individual Catholics disagreed over the categorization of these groups. For instance, the Knights of Columbus were usually mentioned as a traditional group, but received a liberal classification in one instance.

Considering the various Catholic charitable organizations listed in both, they were more likely to be identified as traditional Catholic organizations, but they received a number of mentions associating them with liberal Catholics as well.

In compiling the list of groups named during my interviews, I also tabulated the total number of traditional and liberal groups mentioned by each of my respondents, and I calculate the percentage of respondents mentioning zero, one, two, or three or more groups in response to my questions in Table 3.3 below. Limiting responses to mentions of movement-oriented groups, I also recalculate the percentages and provide these results as well.

TABLE 3.3: NUMBER OF RESPONDENT IDENTIFIED ORGANIZATIONS

Panel 1. Number Named by Respondents.			
	Number Named:	All Groups Percentage:	Movement Groups Percentage*:
Traditional Organizations Named	0	23%	75%
	1	31%	15%
	2	27%	10%
	3+	19%	0%
Liberal Organizations Named	0	71%	85%
	1	15%	4%
	2	10%	6%
	3+	4%	4%
*Non-movement groups removed. N=48.			
Panel 2. Percent Who Named at Least One Movement-oriented Group			
	Percentage:	(N)	
Overall:	33%	48	
Self-identified Traditionals:	33%	9	
Self-identified Moderates:	23%	22	
Self-identified Liberals:	57%	14	

In their responses, 71% of my interviewees were unable to identify by name a single Catholic organization that they associated with liberal Catholics. On the other hand, 23% of them were unable to name a single Catholic organization that they associated with traditional Catholics, and this percentage rises to 56% if just three groups are discounted—Knights of Columbus, Daughters of Isabella, and the St. Vincent DePaul Society. Both the Knights of Columbus and the Daughters of Isabella are social groups and generally have not been discussed in the literature on “traditional” Catholic movement organizations. Still, my interviews suggest it may be useful to consider them as such and add them to the list of groups associated with traditional Catholics. Similarly, St. Vincent DePaul Society, a charitable Catholic group, is not usually discussed in connection to the “traditional” Catholic movement, but might be considered in this context as well. Unlike the first two groups, however, while more of my respondents deem the St. Vincent DePaul Society as “traditional,” several respondents regard the Society as associated with liberal Catholics and some who initially group it with traditional Catholics mention that some Catholics might question this label.

Regardless, my interviewees, most of whom were not members of these groups themselves, generally connected the Knights of Columbus and Daughters of Isabella (along with others such as the Holy Name Society, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, etc.) to an earlier time period and to their parents’ or grandparents’ lives rather than to a current religious movement or to their own lives. Below are a few such examples,

“Knights of Columbus, talk about traditional, I just remember them as being at very, very special masses like ordinations where they would come in their suits of armor and swords and come down the aisle and, oh, boy, that was a big deal when you were a kid, to see that. Talk about tradition, but boy, I don’t see them, do they even exist in town?” (Age 27, Television Broadcaster)

Well I think of the Knights of Columbus as being a traditional organization, but I never belonged. I had a lot of my friends' fathers belong, but I never really knew any young guys that belonged to it, and I was never invited into it. (Age 67, Pharmacist)

Knights of Columbus, Holy named society. I tend to think of those as more traditional because it used to be when I was a child that they were the ones, by God, for the letter of the law. (Age 64, retired Teacher)

Do they still have a Knights of Columbus? I'd associate them with traditional Catholics, but I don't know if that's true. My dad used to be a member of Knights of Columbus. (Age 53, Registered Nurse)

It is informative to recognize the way that traditional Catholic identity is connected to a set of institutions and relationships associated with an earlier time period in American Catholicism. I will return to this later but simply want to note at present that traditional Catholic identity is often connected to organizations and activities associated with an earlier generation. I believe this illustrates that a significant part of traditional Catholic identity remains rooted in pre-Vatican II associations and sensibilities. (This may also be true of traditional Catholic organizations such as the Legion of Mary and the Blue Army.)

Limiting my analysis to italicized (movement-oriented) groups from Table 3.2, only 25% of my respondents identify a traditional movement organization and only 15% identify a liberal Catholic organization. Overall, 33% name at least one movement-oriented Catholic group. This distribution of responses matches quite well the distribution of my respondents who said that they had considered joining an organization or reading a periodical associated with traditional or liberal Catholics (see Table 3.4 below).¹

¹ A few of my respondents mention receiving the Catholic Digest and/or the Catholic Key but were not sure whether these were traditional or liberal periodicals and did not subscribe to them on that basis.

I conclude that about a third of my interviewees have at least some acquaintance with self-consciously traditional and liberal Catholic movement organizations (though even here the acquaintance is often limited), but the rest cannot even identify a single such organization and have never considered joining an organization or reading a periodical associated with these movements. A majority continue to lack acquaintance with movements even when I exclude moderate Catholics from consideration and limit the sample to traditional and liberal Catholics. Of all self-identified traditional and liberal Catholics interviewed, 58% fail to name a single movement-oriented organization associated with either traditional or liberal Catholics and 52% report never having considered joining such an organization or reading such a periodical.

TABLE 3.4: CONSIDERATION OF JOINING A MOVEMENT

Have you ever considered joining an organization or reading a periodical associated with traditional or liberal Catholics?		
	Yes	(N)
All Respondents	30%	47
Self-identified Traditional Catholics	22%	9
Self-identified moderate Catholics	14%	22
Self-identified Liberal Catholics	64%	14

Of course, as you can see from Table 3.4, there are sizable differences between liberal and traditional identifiers in their consideration of joining such a movement. I should emphasize that these differences are based on a small number of cases but still suggest differing levels of interest in joining such groups. Of course, acquaintance with such groups was often associated with consideration of joining. As I will discuss in more detail later, differences in city and parish milieu seem to be especially important for explaining who is acquainted with movement organizations or not. In particular, my

liberal parish (home to 9 of my liberal respondents) is located in a city where several of the movement organizations are based. As a result, its members are more aware of movement groups generally (both traditional and liberal) than are those in the other two parishes.²

Regardless, most Catholics I interviewed are not acquainted with liberal and traditional religious movements, yet are clearly and consistently able to describe traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic individuals. Even more importantly, being acquainted with religious movement organizations does not seem to increase people's likelihood of identification with the cause being pushed by these organizations. For example, the parish where members were least likely to know of movement organizations was also the parish with the most individuals who identified as traditional, moderate or liberal in response to my initial open-ended question regarding Catholic identity. Thus, Catholics who are not familiar with traditional and liberal Catholic movement organizations are no less likely than other respondents to voluntarily label themselves "traditional," "moderate," or "liberal." If anything, familiarity with these organizations diminishes Catholics likelihood of volunteering these labels. Nor did the descriptions of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics differ appreciably between those who were and those were not familiar with movement organizations.

As a final test of individuals' knowledge of traditional and liberal Catholic movements, I mention all 29 specific organizations, periodicals, personalities and terms listed earlier in Table 3.1. After mentioning each item, I ask my respondents if they

² This parish is also connected to a university and is run by a liberal-leaning religious order, and I would consider it a more extreme "liberal" parish than is the "traditional" parish at which I conducted interviews. Still, even in this parish, half of my interviewees were not acquainted with traditional and liberal movement organizations.

recognize or are aware of that organization (or periodical, person, etc.). If they recognize the item, I then ask in what context they know the group and whether they can identify it as traditional, moderate, liberal, none of the above, or are unable to classify it.

Transferring all the responses to Excel, I create a column for each item and a row for each individual, such that each cell in the spreadsheet indicates a single item-response of a single person (i.e. 28 items asked of 48 respondents equals 1344 total responses or total cells). In Table 3.5 below, I provide the percentage of all responses (cells) in which my interviewees mention that an item sounds familiar and then the percentage that they actually correctly identify, sorted by parish.

Table 3.5: ABILITY TO IDENTIFY MOVEMENT GROUPS/MEDIA

I'm going to list a wide variety of periodicals, organizations, and terms associated with Catholicism. I would like you to indicate which ones sound familiar. As I read this list, just let me know if you recognize the item. You may not have heard of any of these, and that's ok.

	(N)	<u>Total # of responses</u>	<u>% Sound Familiar</u>	<u>% Correctly Identified*</u>
Traditional Parish	(15)	420	20%	9%
Moderate Parish	(19)	532	23%	8%
Liberal Parish	(14)	392	43%	28%
Total:	(48)	1344	28%	14%

*This table reports Franciscans, Our Sunday Visitor, and Today's Catholic as correctly identified if they are identified as either Moderate or Traditional

While only a few respondents were aware of Today's Catholic and these few viewed it as "moderate," many more recognized Franciscans and the Our Sunday Visitor and most identified these items as "traditional." In creating Table 3.5, I chose to accept

either moderate or traditional identification as correct for all three of these items (Today's Catholic, Franciscans, and Our Sunday Visitor) as a way of acknowledging my respondents' opinions. I should also note that including these three groups slightly increases the likelihood of my respondents correctly identifying movement items as compared to excluding them.

Out of 28 items on my list, then, between 5 and 6 are mentioned as familiar, on average, at the traditional and moderate parishes, whereas 12, on average, sounded familiar at the liberal parish. Considering just the items mentioned as sounding familiar, just under half were correctly identified by parishioners of the traditional and moderate parishes, while a little over half of these were correctly identified at the liberal parish. On average, then, between 2 and 3 items were correctly identified by respondents at the traditional and moderate parishes, and between 7 and 8 were correctly identified by those at the liberal parish. The parish differences that I noted with regard to naming organizations is even more apparent when listing organizations, periodicals, etc. for identification. Finally, considering that I include the Jesuits and Franciscans (both large religious orders) in my list, the fact that, on average, only 2 to 3 items are identified and connected to liberal or traditional movements at two of my parishes illustrates the general lack of acquaintance with these movements among them.

If it is not necessary to be acquainted with a religious movement or its organizations in order to identify with a religious identity, then scenario number two fails to accurately represent the process of religious identity formation and identification among most Catholics. While self-identification as a traditional or liberal may be associated with awareness of religious movements and organizations for some Catholics,

it is not true for the majority of Catholics (or even a majority of self-identified traditional and liberal Catholics in my interviews). Thus, scenario number two could apply at most to the 1/3 of Catholics I interviewed who are acquainted with religious movement organizations (note that this is probably a higher percentage than in the ordinary public because my sample is drawn from active Catholics who are most likely to be informed of such movements). However, it does not apply to the vast majority of Catholics who identify themselves as traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholics and are not acquainted with these movements.

In the third scenario, movement organizations are important insofar as they build on acknowledged differences within the religious community and articulate commonly-held positions. In promoting their agenda and attempting to generate public attention (via interaction with the media), movement organizations often court conflict in order to publicize disagreements and highlight issues. By forcing debate, these organizations seek to compel Catholics into choosing sides on particular issues. If this is true, then movement organizations may be more focused on confrontation, in order to generate media attention, than on socializing members into a religious identity.

When asked whether they know of any organizations associated with traditional and liberal Catholics, many of my respondents acknowledge the existence of such groups even if though they don't know of any personally by name. For example, when I ask Bruce if there are any organizations that he would associate with liberal Catholics, he replies

“I’m sure they’re out there, but I don’t know what they are. But I’m sure they’re out there.” (Age 61, Professor)

As a result, some of my interviewees start with a notion of the “issues” important to traditional and liberal Catholics and then work backwards trying to think of groups that take stands on such issues. This was especially obvious when they could not come up with names of actual groups, but simply spoke of the positions that such groups would take on issues.

Lisa, for example, mentions a group from her childhood that she is not sure exists anymore, but emphasizes that organizations of this type would be associated with traditional Catholics.

“I guess what I call traditional would be, um, I’m remembering this from my childhood, I don’t even know whether they have an organization like that anymore, it was called the Eucharistic League, and, it would be a group of people who had a devotion to the Eucharist, and perhaps made first Fridays or did visitations, things of that nature. I would say that would be very traditional, something associated with the rituals and beliefs of the Catholic Church. (Age 57, Professor)

Unable to name any liberal Catholic organizations, Lisa again notes her expectation that such organizations exist and suggests that homosexuality and the incorporation of the laity in decision-making are key issues that would lead to their development.

“There probably is a group of gay and lesbians, I remember in the bulletin seeing something about that, and so there probably is a group for them. And with the scandal in the church on sexual abuse of priests, I’m sure there are probably groups that have sprung up over that, who are seeking real changes in the church with the respect to the incorporation of the laity in decision-making. I would see that as being certainly not traditional, not even middle road, because it would, you know, really mean profound changes. I’m reasonably sure that there are those types of liberal groups.

Similarly, Joan highlights particular issues and suggests that she knows, from what she has read in the media, that there are such groups out there.

“Yeah, if there’s one that’s trying to change the hierarchy of the church or like get rid of the pope...I suppose a liberal would be a group that wants women priests. I

read those things so I know there is something out there, but I can't put a name to it." (Age 61, Housewife)

Again, in speaking of traditional groups, she says,

"I know there is probably...I don't know if there's a particular Catholic group that's for birth control. And also I haven't talked about the death penalty. I hate to say that, you know, this is on the opposite end, the traditional would be the ones that are pro-life."

So, instead of starting with a knowledge of movement organizations and using this to construct or access images of traditional and liberal Catholics, my respondents seem to start with images of traditional and liberal Catholics AND knowledge of the issues important to them. Then, they try to think of organizations that fit this schema.

In the importance placed on particular issues for understanding the divisions between traditional and liberal Catholics, I find potential support for scenario number three as a connection between movement groups and religious identity. As I will discuss in more detail below, a rather stable set of issues are usually identified as dividing traditional and liberal Catholics, and these are often discussed in the media, which may rely on movement organizations or their members to provide a newsworthy quote. If movement organizations play an important role in identity formation among Catholics, then it is through this process of issue generation and the subsequent promotion of these issues in the media.

This third scenario provides at least two reasons why individual Catholics are less antagonistic in describing other Catholics than a review of movement organizations would warrant. First, most Catholics are not acquainted with movement organizations and are thus not socialized into their religious identity by such organizations. Second, because media attention is crucial for movement success and media organizations often

respond more quickly (perhaps only respond) to confrontation and spectacle, movements have an incentive to create conflict and oversell divisions rather than focusing on points of agreement between ‘opposing’ groups and actors.

The Catholic Parishioner as Sociologist

How do Catholics themselves describe the development of their religious identity and images of ‘the other’? In interviews, they refer to their personal interactions with other Catholics and their own experiences as Catholics (along with stereotypes and politics) in developing their religious identity and in identifying different types of Catholics. These types are not always neatly labeled traditional, moderate, and liberal in their own minds. However, they are associated with basic orientations towards the Church (regarding change and the importance of rules) that I touched on in chapter 2 and with certain contentious issues that are often highlighted by movement groups in their interaction with the media (e.g., abortion, birth control, female priests, etc.). This “typing” of Catholics (or categorizing of Catholics) is also connected to the political arena through its overlap with contemporary political issues.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, my respondents identify themselves with one type or another, placing themselves into one category or another depending on how they see themselves vis-à-vis others. Thus, how they define these reference groups is of paramount importance for their religious self-identification. In constructing categories and sorting individuals into types, my parishioners are not unlike sociologists in that they seek to identify patterns in their own interactions with other Catholics and use these patterns as a means to construct ideal-types. Among my respondents, the data accumulated and used for identifying patterns, rather than a random sample of

parishioners or a national survey of individuals, are from their own lived experiences as Catholics, as well as information from politics, and stereotypes garnered from books and the media. While appropriating ideas, notions, and labels from other people and other areas of life, they do not passively accept categorizations but actively construct their own ideas about the differences between traditionals and liberals.

Paula provides a good example of everyday Catholics' explanations of where they get their images of traditional and liberal Catholics, and the process they use for "figuring out" these differing types of Catholics. She explains,

"Oh I know some of it is just the stereotype, like you know what you read about, but also it's kind of what I've just noticed and picked up on as I observe. I've noticed that the people who seem to have the more traditional view of church are the ones who are more into the devotions. You know, and I know most older Catholics get the Magnificat, but the really conservative ones, you'll see them reading it during mass as opposed to looking up. And you know I noticed that they're the ones who are exasperated when they see that we're not doing what the rules say every Sunday in mass. And I just noticed the behaviors of people who readily identify as liberal and it's kind of how I've gotten my view of them. You know just observation really. (Age 30, Administrative Assistant)

Brian: You talked about observation and then you mentioned a little bit about stereotypes that you read. Where have you read those, or gotten those from?

Like in literature there are a lot of authors who are perhaps lapsed Catholics or no longer Catholics and they give you descriptions about people that they knew growing up. You know older people and so on, and they talk about their habits and their beliefs and all this and they label them, "they were real traditional" and all. And it's a stereotype but it really does have its basis in fact because I see people who are actually like that. It's the same with liberal Catholics, I read some books where the author has been perhaps critical of them and labels a certain type of person who is liberal.

Brian: What kind of books are you thinking about?

Of all places, sometimes Tom Clancy when he's describing a character or speaks of someone who has no "love for liberals," so you definitely get a stereotype there. I know that Anne Rice is good for that too, giving descriptions, just of characters that she's made out of people she's met and you just get a real image of folks and you're like "Oh, I know someone just like that." So, it connects with

your own experience.”

Experience, conversation, and observation were cited time and again by my respondents in explaining how they developed their own religious identity and their images of traditional and liberal Catholics. Ron explains,

“Certainly in your conversations with one another, you’re listening and formulating and trying out stuff that you think ‘Well, maybe this.’ So over the years what you read, your conversations are very informative. (Age 73, retired Professor)

I will not try to provide all the quotes in which experience, conversation, and observation are mentioned, because they can be found in just about every single interview. However, I wish to underscore the fact that my respondents generally assume that all Catholics recognize these different types or categories of Catholics.

For instance, in clarifying where he has gotten these images, Pete explains,

“Well from growing up with priests, obviously... I think just being part of a parish you get a feel for where people fall on that spectrum.” (Age 36, Claims Manager)

Pete also highlights the way that conversation is combined with observation by parishioners in identifying others. When I ask what clues he uses to figure people out, he replies,

I think the big thing is birth control. You know there is the Catholic teaching on birth control and there is what independent decisions you make.

Brian: Can I ask, though, how do you know what people think about that?

Well with some people it just comes out in conversation, like “Connor was a surprise,” and you say, “Well, there are ways to avoid that. We tried it the Catholic way and it wasn’t working, so...” Just joking conversations like that. I think even just from general conversations you get a feel for where people are. How they conduct themselves, how they react to different things. As I get more involved in the church, how people are in meetings and things like that, you can kind of gauge where people are and things like that.

Obviously, interactions with people are important, but my respondents also mention the importance of experiences with different kinds of parishes. For instance, Alice explains,

“To be honest with you, I hadn’t really thought about it until you asked me about them. I always thought I was kind of a moderate/liberal, but traditional... I think it’s from when I went to Christ the King. It seemed like a straight laced, traditional, unyielding place, but our church seems more relaxed and freer in their thinking and feelings.” (Age 82, retired Auditor)

As the three parishes in my study show, there are considerable differences across parishes. Thus, Catholics’ experiences with different kinds of parishes help to solidify their notions of what it means to be a traditional or liberal Catholic.

Still, I do not want to give the impression that Catholics’ construction of these categories is a perfectly precise undertaking. In fact, the loose-coupling of movements and identities suggests that identities are more likely to be fuzzy. This is because identification is no longer based on anything as concrete as membership in a movement organization, instead it is continuously constructed by individuals in interaction. Also, as I noted earlier, individual Catholics do not take random samples. Thus, parish membership and social networks play an important role in the development of Catholics’ reference groups.

Let me provide just one example of how parish context can affect images and understandings of traditionals and liberals. Whereas the issue of birth control was viewed as the most important issue dividing traditional and liberal Catholics at my moderate and traditional parishes, this was not true of my liberal parish. Instead, these parishioners emphasized abortion as the most important issue. When I asked several of them why birth control was not the most important issue, they explained that they simply felt the

issue had largely been settled. According to them, basically all Catholics now use birth control, so it really does not divide Catholics any longer. Catholics had “moved on” to other issues. This was not the attitude held by members of the other two parishes. Even if many of them chose to use birth control, it was a moral decision with which they often struggled and about which they sometimes experienced feelings of guilt. Still, even though members of the liberal parish told me that they had “moved on,” it is interesting to note that they still listed it as an issue dividing traditional and liberals—just not the most important issue.

Finally, these different types of Catholics are not always neatly labeled “traditional,” “moderate,” and “liberal” by everyday Catholics. When I ask Carrie why she ended up labeling the categories the way she did. She replies,

“Actually I probably wouldn’t have labeled them except that’s how you are labeling it. I mean so to say traditional I’ve probably used but liberal, probably not....maybe more conservative, well liberal is not conservative. And I would probably say more conservative versus traditional. Ok yeah, I probably wouldn’t have used those exact labels. (Age 43, Analyst for Insurance Company)

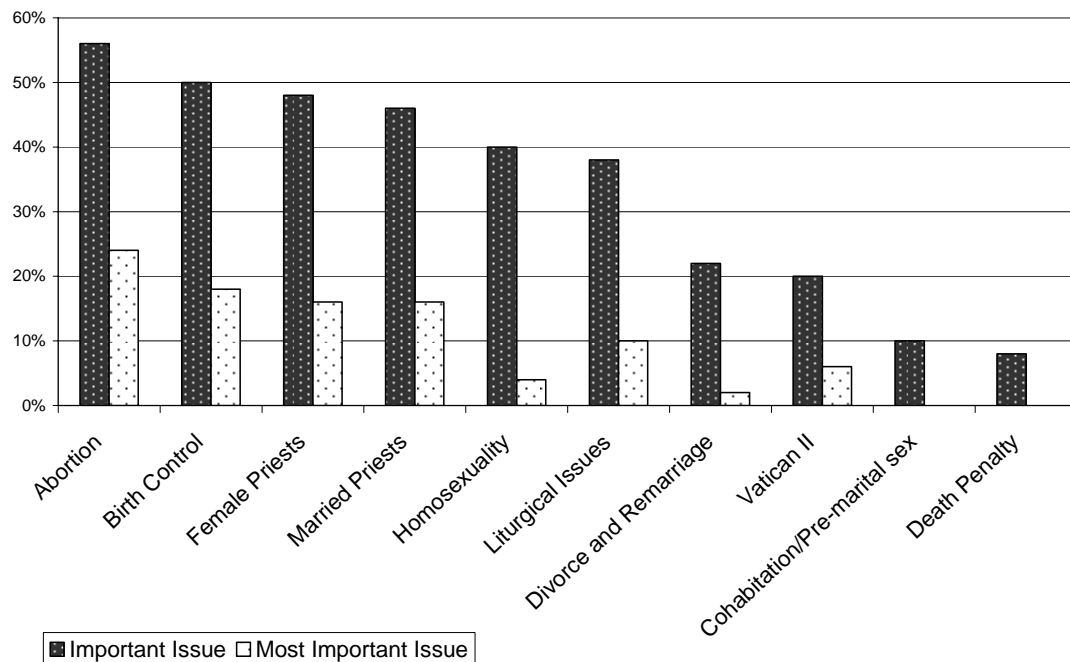
If individuals are actively constructing identities out of their own experiences and are not always using the same labels, how is it that they come up with relatively consistent categories? I want to suggest the importance of three inter-connected cultural tools that Catholics use to make sense of their differences—issues, orientations, and politics.

The Importance of Issues and Orientations in

Dividing Traditional and Liberal Catholics

What do most Catholics consider the “issues” that divide traditional and liberal Catholics? I find a remarkably stable set of core issues among my respondents, and in Figure 3.1, I display a bar chart of these results. The five topics that are most often

mentioned are abortion, birth control, female priests, married priests, and homosexuality. Some of these issues overlap with current political fights, for example, arguments about



Percent Volunteering Each Issue as Dividing Traditional and Liberal Catholics

Figure 3.1

the legality of same-sex marriage, battles over abstinence-only vs. comprehensive sex education, and contemporary wrangling over Supreme Court nominations and legalized abortion. Other issues, however, are matters internal to the Catholic Church (i.e. whether a priest should be able to marry or whether a woman should be able to be a priest) and are not clearly connected to contemporary U.S. politics. If not politics, is there another common denominator of these issues? Most of the issues mentioned in my interviews revolve around sexuality. In fact, all of the top five issues listed are connected to gender and sexuality. Yet, while some of the less-often mentioned issues are also related to this

topic (e.g., divorce and cohabitation), some of them are not (e.g., liturgy, Vatican II, and the death penalty).

Considered from another angle, almost all of these issues are key elements of the liberal Catholic agenda for reform, except perhaps liturgical issues, which are often emphasized by traditional Catholic groups. Theories of movement and counter-movement are particularly compelling in explaining the rise of liberal and traditional Catholic special purpose groups. Many researchers argue that the origins of contemporary Catholic conflict are to be found in Catholics' response to the release of the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, by Pope Paul VI, in which he reaffirmed the traditional Church teaching regarding birth control. (see Seidler and Meyer, 1989 for a discussion of the circumstances and politics surrounding this encyclical) Since movement organizations are likely to be important for agenda setting in the media, this correspondence of movement agendas with the issues that most Catholics mention is probably no coincidence. Nor should it be a surprise that so many of these issues are focused on sexuality, if the initial confrontation from which these movements originated was a conflict over birth control and sexuality.

Are these issues recognized by all Catholics or do they differ across groups? In my interviews, traditionals, moderates and liberals all generally agreed on the issues dividing Catholics, with one possible exception, the issue of "married priests." While 50% and 64% of moderates and liberals, respectively, saw this as an issue dividing traditional and liberal Catholics, only 11% of traditionals (one of my nine self-identified traditional respondents) volunteered this as something that divides traditional and liberal Catholics. Why might traditional Catholics view the issue of married priests differently?

Unlike other issues, the Church hierarchy has not attempted stop internal debate on the issue of priestly celibacy. Consequently, traditional Catholic movement organizations have not been as vociferous in their denunciation of individuals who mention it as a future option for the Church. Unfortunately, in my interviews, I did not probe traditional Catholics about this question and therefore cannot provide a definitive answer to it.

In Chapter 2, many of these same issues were discussed by my respondents in describing traditional, moderate and liberal Catholics. At that time, however, I focused more on the differing general orientations of traditional Catholics with regard to: 1) change in the Church and 2) rules of the Church. I argued that traditional Catholics resisted change in the Church and sought to follow the rules of the Church. In contrast, liberal Catholics sought to change the Church and resisted strict interpretations of Church rules. I focused on these basic orientations because they were even more prominent than the specific issues cited above. In fact, 53% of my respondents explicitly mentioned people's stance towards change and 57% mentioned their stance towards the rules of the Church in explaining the differences between traditionals and liberals. For other respondents, their discussion of the issues dividing traditionals and liberals implicitly made use of such ideas (or were consistent with them), even if they were not explicitly mentioned (see Table 3.6).

TABLE 3.6: ORIENTATIONS DIVIDING TRADITIONALS AND LIBERALS

	<u>Stance Towards Change</u>	<u>Stance Towards the Rules of the Church</u>
Explicitly Mention:	53%	57%
Implied in their Discussion:	39%	31%
Total (Explicit + Implicit):	92%	88%

The Importance of Politics

Politics plays an important role in some ordinary Catholics explanations of traditionals and liberals, but they often find these political explanations lacking when applied to religion. Politics are recognized as connected to religious identity for several reasons. First, contemporary political discourse and debates often revolve around “values,” and my respondents consider their political choices to be a reflection of their values. Second, they root their own values in their religious identity. Finally, political behavior, especially voting, is one of the few circumstances where individual Catholics feel forced to make a concrete (either/or) choice based on their values. As a result, when Catholics see or hear about other Catholics making political choices different from themselves, they often interpret these conflicting political choices as reflecting conflicting values choices, and since they root their own values in religious identity, they conceive of political divisions as rooted in religious divisions.

For example, Jessica notes,

“There’s an intersection between religion and politics. So, I see myself as because I’m Catholic I’m a Democrat. Whereas other people would say because I’m Catholic, I’m a Republican. So, I see the connection between politics and Catholicism as very close, but not for the reasons that people would consider themselves Republican and Catholic. (Age 29, Professor)

Jessica goes on to say that her sense of compassion for the poor comes from her religious sensibilities, which is why she is a Democrat, but she recognizes that other Catholics stress their pro-life stance on abortion in explaining why they are Republican.

Still, this intersection of politics and religion is not necessarily a simple one for Catholics. It is confused by a political history in which Catholics have historically tended to be Democrats, though not always the most liberal of Democrats. Yet, in recent years,

Catholics have been subject to increasing appeals by political conservatives (and some within the Church hierarchy) to vote Republican based on a pro-life stance towards abortion, euthanasia, and embryonic stem cell research, as well as opposition to same-sex marriage. At the same time, the Catholic Church, while lending some justification to the war in Afghanistan, came out strongly against the war in Iraq, continues to argue vociferously against the imposition of the death penalty, and has consistently pushed for a more egalitarian distribution of economic resources in the U.S.

Jackie explains her own attempt to navigate this jumble of politics, religion, and labels, and in the process, she swaps the word ‘conservative’ for traditional.

“Can I answer that by saying, I’ve always been traditional but I’m starting to lean liberal. See, growing up, we were Democrat. I mean, I actually thought it was a sin to be a Republican. My dad was out there campaigning for the committee for county progress, and that was about as Democrat as you can get. And then with all the changing social issues and a lot of the things that were happening with the difference between the races and welfare, our family started saying, “Where is this getting our world, you know?” All those things kinda changed our mind about the Democrats, so we kinda switched over to the Republican side. Well, I’m in a different place now. I don’t know, you hear words like raving liberal, “they’re just a bunch of raving liberals, they believe in this, that.” And I never understood it. My brothers would always say, ‘Oh you’re nothing but a liberal.’ I guess I’m a liberal because I don’t like guns, but I would think that I’m a conservative. To me, it’s a raving liberal that runs out there, “Freedom, let me wave my gun or whatever I want to do.” So then I have to kind of learn that that’s the label that they put on people who don’t like guns. (Age 53, Registered Nurse)

In speaking of a dislike of guns, Jackie connects this more broadly to her anti-war and anti-violence outlook, and she finds that such views are labeled “liberal” even though she connects them to a Catholic standpoint. Similarly, Al equates traditional with ‘conservative’ and links liberal Catholics with liberal politics, while noting the historic tendency of Catholics to vote Democrat.

“Oh I think politics are predictably different. I think the conservative Catholics are less likely these days to be dyed-in-the-wool Democrats the way Catholics

used to be characterized. Some of the Catholics I know are also born-and-bred Republicans, for example. I don't think you are very likely to see very many liberal Catholics who are Republican. Somehow they tend to go hand in glove, and I think that has to do with the social aspects of the whole community I guess.” (Age 71, Retired from Organization Management)

This transposing of traditional and conservative happened in quite a few of my interviews. In so doing, my respondents underscore the importance they place on politics as a dividing line, and reveal how they appropriate political terminology in explaining Catholic divisions, even though they generally see political differences as a consequence (not a cause) of religious divisions.

In many cases, my respondents argue that the importance of politics is a consequence of political debate over issues dividing traditionalists and liberals. For instance, in speaking of the issues that divide traditionalists and liberals, Eric says,

“Those issues probably land in the political arena, a lot of them anyway. Issues of abortion, divorce and different types of social issues. I think they create a divide along those lines.” (Age 33, Social Researcher)

Yet, religious divisions are not simply reducible to politics. For example, Ashley argues,

I think for me the divide between traditional and liberal Catholics is different from that of political conservatives and liberals because as I alluded to before, my continuum of traditional conservative to liberal Catholic is based on my experiences with my dad [and his inability to question the Church]. So I don't divide Catholics up based on their willingness to be against abortion, you know, the things that physically divide people on the political spectrum. What I divide Catholics by is their willingness to question the Church's position on things. The political spectrum—I'm divided on the way that you would expect it to be, you know, big spending, little spending. Abortion, no abortion. Affirmative action, no affirmative action. That's how I would divide up the liberals and the conservatives in the political end. It's very different...for me in terms of being Catholic. (Age 32, Lawyer)

While issues like abortion might unite people's cultural concept of political divisions with their notion of religious divisions, this is not always the case. Religious

divisions do not always link up neatly with the political divisions of right and left, especially when connected to following the rules of the Church. For example, the issue of the death penalty was viewed by some as an issue that does not overlap neatly in the religious and political realms. Pete starts to say that the division between traditionalists and liberals is identical to that of conservatives and liberals, but then is forced to correct himself.

“I think they are the same. I’m trying to think of . . . it’s too hard because you have to argue with yourself, going back to capital punishment, opposition to the death penalty is a strong conservative Catholic tenet. Yet, you’re not going to see too many right-wing on the spectrum agreeing with that position. (Age 36, Claims Manager)

Interestingly, even when arguing for differences between the religious and political divide, Pete transposes (or equates) traditional with conservative. In doing so, he illustrates how dependent Catholics are on the concepts and language appropriated from politics in interpreting the Catholic religious divide, even when attempting to articulate how political and religious divisions are different.

Another issue that did not always mirror the political divide was the issue of economic justice and helping the poor. As I indicated earlier, Catholic charitable organizations were more likely to be identified as associated with traditional rather than liberal Catholics (although there was not total agreement on this placement). Similarly, my respondents mention that helping the poor is as an element of traditional Catholic identity as much as it is for liberal Catholics. Joan states, “I mean feeding the hungry is not liberal.” (Age 61, Housewife) Pete, who earlier had to correct himself in equating political and religious divisions, notes that traditional Catholics in following the Church often take a more liberal political stance towards economic justice as well.

“Yeah, I think the church is more liberal politically in terms of assistance to the poor and helping out those less fortunate.” (Age 36, Claims Manager)

Because Catholics cannot translate their religious beliefs directly into a political agenda, they sometimes speak of feeling “torn” in making political decisions based on their religious beliefs. Thus, Pete concludes,

“I think in terms of the right to life issues, where you think of a more liberal standpoint would be against capital punishment but then a more conservative viewpoint would be against abortion, yeah, you’re torn.”

A few of my respondents move beyond a mere discussion of issues and speak of a vision of political liberals as oriented toward changing society (depending upon their political affinity, this was sometimes deemed ‘progress,’ other times not) and political conservatives as resisting change in society. For instance, Bob notes,

“Liberal comes closer to being off the wall, to me. It’s a lot to do with politics, too, and I’m pulling liberal out of politics I guess. But I think a lot of liberals are off the wall. I mean they want to change things rapidly but some of them don’t need changing and some of them certainly don’t need changing as far as they want to go.” (Age 65, retired Electrical Engineer)

Characterizing contemporary ‘conservative’ Republicans in the U.S., with their recent implementation of radical new changes in both economic and foreign policy, as resisting change might strike some as strange.³ Yet, connecting political conservatives with religious traditionalists (as opponents of change and proponents of tradition) and political liberals with religious liberals (as proponents of progress) was another way that Catholics linked religious orientations to politics. When my respondents align political orientations towards change in society with religious orientations towards change in the Church, then divisions between traditional and liberal Catholics are linked to those between political conservatives and liberals.

³ European conservatives rooted in the political tradition of Burke (and others) are a different story and might be more appropriately understood as decisively oriented towards stability and against change.

Although the religious and political divides do overlap at times for Catholics, the overlap is certainly not complete. A simple cross-tabulation of my national data proves the truth of this (see Table 3.7). While self-identified traditional Catholics are more

TABLE 3.7: CATHOLIC IDENTIFICATION BY POLITICAL VIEWS

	Politically Liberal*	Politically Conservative ⁺
Traditional	22%	38%
Moderate	18%	33%
Liberal	40%	30%
None of the Above	29%	31%

*Combined percentage of extremely liberal, liberal, and somewhat liberal

⁺Combined percentage of extremely conservative, conservative, somewhat conservative

likely to be politically conservative and less likely to be politically liberal than liberal Catholics, the difference is not large, and the fact that 30% of liberal Catholics identify themselves as politically conservative illustrates that these religious and political divisions are clearly not identical. As a result, using purely political language to explain religious differences is insufficient to the task at hand. Many of my interviewers noted their resistance to labels and to being labeled religiously. Sometimes this distaste for labels was simply rooted in a dislike of pigeon-holing individuals, but other times it seemed to be because my respondents found language borrowed from politics inadequate for explaining the religious differences between Catholics and therefore ill-suited to the task of defining them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I conclude that movement organizations are only loosely-coupled to the development of religious identity among Catholics and are therefore limited in their control of the meanings attached to these identities. This helps to explain why ordinary Catholics are less antagonistic towards each other than an investigation of

movement groups might suggest. First, most Catholics are not acquainted with Catholic movement organizations. Second, since religious movement groups' greatest influence is in their interaction with the media and opinion leaders, movements have an incentive to create conflict and oversell divisions in order to generate media attention. Thus, movement organizations will often provide a vision of Catholic life that is skewed towards conflict and strife.

Movement organizations' interaction with the media helps to explain why the issues seen as dividing traditional and liberal Catholics remain relatively stable across parishes and groups, even when Catholics are individually constructing their own 'types' (or categories) of Catholics. I also showed how Catholics appropriate cultural ideas and terms from politics to help explain the religious differences between Catholics. While the use of politics and political terminology might serve to increase uniformity, it does so at the cost of precision—as many Catholics find this political language inadequate to fully articulating the religious differences that they observe in daily life. While the particular issues dividing Catholics may come from movement organizations and the media, Catholics continue to rely, in the end, on their own interactions with other Catholics as the basis for their cognitive map of Catholicism (and their understandings of religious identity).

Even more important than the issues mentioned as dividing traditionals and liberals are the basic orientations towards change and rules of the Church that Catholics attributed to these two groups. But where do these general orientations come from, and why do Catholics continue to stress their interactions with other Catholics (and to a lesser extent experiences with other parishes) as the source of their understanding of these

differences? In the next chapter, I suggest that the foundation for these differing orientations can be found in social location, and I argue that we need to consider the differing social bases of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic identification in order to understand the religious divide among American Catholics today.

Chapter 4- Social Fissures:

Exploring the Socio-Demographic Sources of Catholic Division

In articulating two competing visions of Church and labeling them traditional and liberal, my respondents seek to highlight the differences between traditional, moderate and liberal Catholics. As I discussed in Chapter 2, while not identical in all 50 interviews, their responses were similar enough in basic content and consistent enough in terms of the specific orientations and issues highlighted to allow one important conclusion to be drawn: competing, but not warring, religious identities exist within the American Catholic Church. In Chapter 3, I considered whether these identities were created by and connected to religious movements. I found that these religious identities were not closely tied to religious movements for most people, and movements, at most, play a role in highlighting and disseminating the important issues dividing traditionals and liberals. In this chapter, I suggest that rather than religious movements it is the socio-demographic circumstances of individuals that most shape these identities.

The Social Bases of Politics and Religion

Political sociologists have long noted how political differences between individuals are firmly rooted in social variation (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944, Lipset 1960, 1988). For years, researchers have charted the way that political beliefs in the U.S. line up on a number of issues, are coupled with competing political orientations, and that individuals link these directly to competing political identities. Consequently, political sociologists in the U.S. consistently consider the social bases that lie beneath the political identities of liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican. Despite arguments over the years about the relative consistency or inconsistency of political

ideology, voting, and political identity among individuals, political sociologists continue to argue that these opinions are rooted in social circumstance. Thus, research has investigated the relative importance of class and religious-based cleavages as well as others for voting and party identification, as well as trends in the effects of these cleavages over time (Brooks and Manza 1999).

As I discussed in my earlier chapters, contemporary Catholics disagree on issues such as female ordination, birth control, abortion, and homosexuality. They also differ in their general orientations towards change in the Church and the strict interpretation of rules. Most importantly, these orientations and issues are linked directly to their identification as traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholics. In this chapter, I explore the social bases of Catholic religious identification using national survey data on 977 Catholics. I then contrast these results with the socio-demographic cleavages that are important for understanding Catholics' political party identification.

In developing hypotheses about the social bases of religious division, I rely on existing theory, but I also reflect on the distinctive history and circumstances of U.S. Catholics. In contrasting the social sources of religious and political division, I show that, among Catholics, the social bases of traditional and liberal Catholic identification diverge sharply from the social sources of identification as a Republican or Democrat. Again, this suggests that religious divisions are not synonymous with politics for Catholics. Finally, focusing on the intergenerational nature of religious divisions, I borrow the idea that the nature of social contact affects people's perceptions of social conflict (Kelley and Evans 1995), and suggest a further reason why traditional and liberal Catholics are not "at war" with each other.

Research on the Social Bases of Religious Division

Wuthnow's research on religious change since 1950, Hunter's research on Evangelicals and their culture wars, and Christian Smith's subsequent study of Protestants' religious self-identification (with a primary focus on Evangelical identity) all speak to the social bases of contemporary religious divisions in the U.S. In this chapter, I extend existing theory on religious change in the U.S. by incorporating several exceptional aspects of American Catholicism and its recent history that have been studied by sociologists studying American Catholics. I then apply this amended theory to national survey data on Catholics' religious self-identification. In so doing, I explore the religious terrain of modern American Catholicism and reveal the social fissures that lie beneath its surface.

As I noted in my introduction, many sociologists of religion argue that, while conflicts between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews once dominated the American religious, social and political landscape, these have been supplanted over the past 50 years by "symbolic warfare" within faith traditions between the religious right and left (Wuthnow 1988, p. 138, 1989, Wuthnow and Lawson 1994) or between progressives and the religiously orthodox (Hunter 1991). Thus, basic disagreements regarding the locus of religious authority and the relative merit of objective or situational ethics have led to ongoing arguments over political issues such as abortion, sexuality, and school prayer.

Most importantly, Wuthnow (1988, 1989, Wuthnow and Lawson 1994) focused on the role of educational divisions in redrawing these symbolic divisions. For instance, the introduction of the large "baby boom" population and the massive expansion of U.S. higher education produced an enormous number of young people with personal

expectations, beliefs and lifestyles quite different from those of their parents. According to Wuthnow (1988), then, the largely government-funded expansion of education since the Second World War has led to rising levels of higher education and widening education gaps within the major faith traditions of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism such that faith traditions are divided along educational lines into conservative and liberal religious camps.

H_{4.1}: Catholics with high educational attainment are more likely to identify as liberal Catholics and less likely to identify as traditional Catholics than those with less education.

Educational differences among competing religious identities may be more complex than is conveyed by Wuthnow's linear educational divide. Thus, I elaborate on this hypothesis by suggesting that there might be diminishing (or increasing) effects of education on identification as a liberal vs. traditional Catholic. As a result, I consider whether the functional form of the effect of education may be curvilinear rather than linear.

H_{4.2}: There are diminishing (or increasing) effects of education on religious identity, such that a curvilinear relationship between higher educational attainment and identification as a liberal Catholics exists. In this case, increasing education will be associated with increased likelihood of identifying as liberal vs. traditional Catholic but the magnitude of the increase diminishes (or increases) with more years of education.

Since Wuthnow specifically emphasizes the expansion of higher education, I also consider whether the educational effects on religious identification are mainly related to

the qualitatively different experiences associated with different levels of education, rather than years of schooling. In this case, the qualitatively different experiences associated with a high school, college, or graduate degree would be more important than differences in years of schooling and would suggest that a multiple dummy measure of highest level of education completed would be the best educational measure.

H_{4.3}: The effect of education on identity is best understood as connected to specific levels of education. In this case, receiving a college degree (or graduate degree) would be associated with greater likelihood of identifying as liberal vs. traditional.

Exploring these competing hypotheses regarding education will help us to understand how education is related to religious divisions among contemporary American Catholics.

American Catholic Exceptionalism:

Incorporating Catholics into Macro-Theory

One of the major limitations of Wuthnow's approach to religious division is that he not only downplays, but essentially removes from consideration the unique circumstances of denominations. Of course, this is directly connected to the key strength of his work in that he is then able to focus on similarities and processes occurring across religions. Smith's work, in particular, has built on this focus and shown that Evangelicals have created a religious identity that, within Protestantism, transcends denominational affiliation. Yet, as my discussion in both Chapters 2 and 3 highlighted, Catholics have not developed a transdenominational identity and Catholic's unique institutional experiences consistently affect the way that they think about and interpret their religious

identity. Therefore, in considering the social bases of Catholic identity, I want to highlight at least two distinctive features of Catholicism that must impact theorizing about the social sources of Catholic division.

First, similar to Wuthnow, sociological and historical research on Catholicism has pointed to the 1960s as an important period of religious transformation among Catholics, but unlike Wuthnow's focus on higher education and politics, this research has usually emphasized the importance of Vatican II in transforming the international Catholic Church (Greeley 1989, Weaver 1986, 1999, Wilde 2002). Catholic religious elites have fiercely debated whether the reforms of Vatican II should be interpreted as a one time liberalization of certain rules of the Church or as an ongoing change in the relationship of the Church to the laity and the world (as when individuals invoke 'the spirit of Vatican II'). Regardless, sociologists have consistently found generational differences among American Catholics and have attributed these differences largely to Vatican II. Using data from my interviews, I consider everyday Catholics' information and understanding of Vatican II and suggest how this might impact their religious identity. Appreciating Vatican II and its importance for generational differences in religious identity is essential to understanding the religious divisions among American Catholics today.

Second, the Catholic Church is a global faith and the United States is a magnet for immigrants from around the world. As a result, Catholics in the U.S. are an amalgamation of different nationalities, ethnicities, and races. Especially when such groups are found in their own distinctive parishes, it is often difficult (if not impossible) to divorce Catholics' ethnic and/or racial identity from their religious one. As such, I consider the way that changing immigration laws and patterns of migration have altered

the character of the Church in the U.S., and I begin to explore how immigration, race, and ethnicity are related to religious identification.

VATICAN II

Vatican II convened during the 1960s (1962-1965), the same time period that saw the enormous changes in American society emphasized by Wuthnow and described above. When the Pope called for the Second Vatican Council, it shocked many insiders and sophisticated observers of Catholicism. Nearly 77 years of age when elected, Pope John XXIII had been viewed by many Cardinal electors as an interim, stop-gap Pope who was not expected to be overly vigorous in his papacy. For political drama and historical interest, few modern religious events have rivaled that of Vatican II, perhaps because it was the first Ecumenical council to take place under the scrutiny of the modern mass media. Under the pseudonym, Xavier Rynne, an anonymous priest-correspondent attending Vatican II wrote a series of guest articles for the New York Times detailing the internal politics and intrigue as well as the practical decisions that were occurring in Vatican City. These articles from 1962 to 1965 were later compiled into a series of books entitled *Letters from Vatican City* (Rynne 1968).

Most of my respondents, however, have few memories regarding the Second Vatican Council and reveal a lack of interest in it at the time, even among those who lived through it. One good example of this is Bob, who identified as a moderate Catholic. When speaking of Vatican II, Bob makes clear his own indifference to the Bishops' activities,

“I kind of treat that almost like I do the government—take care of it, you know? Because I’m not included in it, nobody came and asked me, ‘What do you think about [Vatican II]? We’re gonna think about doing this and this.’ They don’t do that. So, you separate yourself from the high priests, so to speak. They’re there,

they do their thing and they hand it down to us and that's it. So, I don't take too much interest." (Age 65, retired Electrical Engineer)

A related sentiment is voiced by Susan, but she stresses the lack of effort on the part of the institutional Church to truly explain Vatican II to Catholics.

"Well, I tell everybody that Vatican II was the greatest story never told. And it was. We were just told there were changes, and this is how we'll do things now. But I thought the changes were great. I really did. My daughter would come home and say, "Well, now we say 'For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory'" or "we can receive Communion in our hand now." They never explained anything; they just said, "Now you can do this." So, it was totally different." (Age 76, retired from Department of Labor)

Especially among younger Catholics, many feel that they lack an accurate, historical sense of what exactly occurred. Tracy, for instance, when I mention Vatican II asks,

"That's interesting because...is that when they, the priests...used to do the mass facing the back and they had communion rails?" (Age 30, stay-at-home mom)

I nod yes and she goes on,

"Because I remember those types of stories and stuff but I didn't realize that was part of the Vatican change. To be honest with you, I really don't know much about that change. And I've only, I've heard like pieces and bits of it throughout my life but I never really tied it all together. I don't even feel like I've been taught, even through religious education classes, about [that time period]. Everything that I've been taught was always just [about] how it is now. So honestly, I just feel kind of naïve about that whole situation."

Among Catholics who were alive at the time of Vatican II, a few do have vivid memories of the council and the changes that took place. For example, John recalls,

"Oh yeah, I still remember just about everything that took place, of course I was in a Catholic school at the time, so we attended daily mass in Latin, and suddenly we were in the vernacular. It was a remarkable change, and in many ways a very freeing sort of atmosphere, not that we had anything against Latin, we had come pretty far with Latin and still learned it in schools, but it was a remarkable moment and...see that was the basis in many ways for other changes that came [later], maybe more significant changes, if you will. But I am not sure there was anything more significant than language at that point. You have been through the ceremony thousands of times and then suddenly the ceremony changes, yes very vivid memories. You know all the other things that proceeded out of that...[for

example the] folk mass, I remember going to college and having a mass in a room just in some house because it was a Newman Center at [the] University of Missouri, and I had known the priest for years because he had been affiliated with the high school I went to and somehow he got a transfer to the same place I was going to college, and to see the sort of casual folk mass was in some ways breathtaking in its simplicity. You could argue it was bad or good, but that wasn't our point at all, we just simply accepted it as the next step. And it's still pretty vivid. (Age 53, Cook)

Even a few Catholics who were not alive were told stories about the changes by older family members. For example, Jessica reminisces,

“My father would have been 65 if he was still alive, I'm sorry, 64 if he was still alive...He was a very committed Catholic and went to church every day before he died. And I remember he used to tell us stories [about before Vatican II] how the priest was facing the wall, so everybody was looking at the wall. He would also talk about the fact that mass was in Latin and what an impact that had. I remember he used to know a lot of, we would laugh at him because he had a horrible voice, but he would sing songs like *Anno Dominae*, all these different songs that...he knew and we...thought he was strange 'cause he knew all this stuff in Latin. But I actually went with him a couple of times. There was a church in San Antonio, I'm from San Antonio, Texas and we went to this one church where once a month they would have a Latin mass and so my dad and I went a couple of times. And I think that my impression was...I know for a fact that Vatican II was about making it more accessible and more participatory and so before I think, it was far more...like you were removed, and you were kind of in the background and this other stuff was happening. And I got that from my dad too.” (Age 29, Professor)

Regardless of whether they had been told stories about Vatican II or had strong memories of it, most of my respondents did have a generally consistent notion of the cultural change in attitude that occurred within the Catholic Church and among American Catholics after Vatican II. A key element of this change in attitude is what Jessica refers to above when she says,

“I know for a fact that Vatican II was about making it more accessible and more participatory and so before I think, it was far more...like you were removed, and you were kind of in the background (Age 29, Professor)

An example of how Catholics' limited knowledge about the details of Vatican II can coexist with a good sense of the cultural changes brought about by Vatican II is seen in my discussion with Carrie. When I ask whether family members had ever talked about the changes from Vatican II, Carrie responds,

“Just sometimes when you would...just little comments about it being in English so you could understand it, minor things [like] not wearing the veils and little things like that, but not anything major. (Age 43, Analyst for Insurance Company)

Carrie then elaborates,

“I don't know if this is correct but it's more, it's...I don't want to say it's more understandable...it's more 'to the people' as far as it's not 'up here' any more. It's not in another language. It's brought down to where we can understand it. We can be more part of a community, not so much, [there are] the clergy and then us. I think bringing the laity in and making it more...what's the word...tangible.”

When I ask Carrie if she remembers anything that Vatican II changed, she responds,

“Specific things? I think the participation....i'll be honest with you I don't know a lot of the old Vatican things. The participation of the community I think has been one of the best changes they've had. So a change towards bringing the congregation as a community into the celebration of the mass instead of having the priest way up there...[now] he's you know he's part of us. It was just...you were in awe of the priest. I am still in awe of them but they are also human.

This emphasis on the Church as a community, rather than as a hierarchical institution, can be found in the Second Vatican Council's use of the term “people of God” when referring to the Church as a whole. In the U.S. context, many Catholics heard echoes of the nation's democratic cultural legacy in this term and began to apply it to the Church. Susan illustrates this tendency when explaining why she is so proud to be Catholic.

“I think because it's *for the people, of the people*. It sounds kind of, you know, United States government, but I think, you know, the people ARE [the Church], especially now since Vatican II. (Age 76, retired from Department of Labor)

While none of my Catholic interviewees reference Pope John XXIII's call for "aggornimento" or updating, most of them do view the changes arising from the Second Vatican Council as an attempt to modernize the Church and see it as a liberalizing event. For example, Jason observes

"I guess what I come away with from Vatican II is greater participation of the laity in the liturgy, and obviously not saying the mass in Latin or anything, so a greater opportunity for people to really understand what is going on during liturgy. I suppose, those are the big ones. I conceptualize it as just sort of a more liberalizing sort of drift. I don't know if there is an ecumenical kind of element to it or not. I guess I think of most of the changes being about the mass but I am sure there is probably more to it.

This liberalizing drift within the Church as a result of Vatican II, with its concomitant shift towards a communal rather than an institutional and hierarchical vision of Catholicism, has contributed to a generational divide among American Catholics. As this new culture has been institutionalized in local parishes and schools since Vatican II, it has shaped the conceptions of faith of a new generation of American Catholics in a manner different from earlier cohorts (Williams and Davidson 1996, pp. 281-2; Davidson and Williams 1997, p. 509). In a study of Catholic generations, Williams and Davidson (1996) found that the oldest cohort articulated their faith in more institutional terms, seeing the Church as a mediator between themselves and God, while the youngest cohorts expressed their faith in more individualistic terms ("having a personal relationship with God"). Similarly, Greeley found attitudes toward papal authority and papal infallibility fell from 70 and 80 percent, respectively, in 1963 to 42 and 32 percent in 1974, and down to 20 percent for each among Catholics under 30 in 1980 (Greeley 1989:20). As a result, I suggest that younger Catholics, today, are more likely to identify as liberal Catholics,

and older Catholics, socialized as children into a hierarchical and authoritarian vision of Church, are more likely to identify as traditional Catholics.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, D'Antonio, et al. (2001) have written extensively about generational differences in Catholic identity. First, they found that young Catholics were less rigid in their boundaries between Catholics and non-Catholics, being less likely to believe that Catholicism “contains a greater share of truth” or that it is “the one true Church.” Second, they found that young people are less strict in adhering to Catholic teachings regarding birth control and abortion than their elders. Again, this research highlights religious changes within American Catholicism over time, such that the religious attitudes, experiences, and perhaps even identities of more recent cohorts of Catholics are different from those of earlier cohorts or generations.

Whereas Wuthnow emphasizes the importance of education in dividing traditional and liberal religionists, sociologists of American Catholicism (e.g., D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, etc.) instead stress cohort as an important source of Catholic divisions, with younger Catholics born after Vatican II being much more comfortable questioning religious authorities and showing a greater willingness to seek changes in the Church than older Catholics born prior to Vatican II. While D'Antonio et al. (2001) operationalized generational differences as discrete categories indicating pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, or post-Vatican II generations, some of the processes described by them (such as the diffusion of a post-Vatican II culture into schools and parishes) likely did not occur all at once and might be better understood as a process of gradual change over time. Since gradual processes are not necessarily discrete and since researchers have not tested models with alternative measures of cohort, I suggest that a linear effect of year of birth

might be more appropriate. In order to determine if cohort differences are best measured as generations or year of birth, I hypothesize

H_{4.4}: A linear effect of birth year best operationalizes Catholic divisions, with Catholics born earlier being more likely to identify as traditional Catholics than Catholics born more recently.

Alternatively,

H_{4.5}: Generation best operationalizes Catholic divisions, with Pre-Vatican II Catholics being more likely to identify as traditional Catholics than Vatican II or Post-Vatican II Catholics. Post-Vatican II Catholics are the most likely to identify as liberal Catholics.

Finally, in a recent examination of the values that parents seek to instill in children, Rob Robinson and I (Forthcoming) found a curvilinear effect of cohort for the entire population (and also for Catholics) such that younger Catholics today are more likely to value obedience in their children as opposed to thinking for oneself than Catholics of middle age. Consequently, younger Catholics views regarding autonomy and obedience in children are more akin to the attitudes of elderly Catholics. In another paper, we (unpublished) theorized and found that orthodox moral cosmology is linked to greater valuation of obedience over autonomy in children. If these values of obedience and autonomy are linked to religious identity among Catholics, then younger Catholics may be beginning to return to a more traditional religious orientation as well.

Some of my interviews also suggest that generational shifts may be changing, with more recent cohorts returning to a traditional identity. For example, the pastor at St. Boniface indicates,

“I am encountering more, what I would say would be, traditional Catholics among young people today. Actually, I probably wouldn’t say traditional Catholics, I would probably say conservative Catholics. People who identify true Catholicism with an earlier expression of Catholicism, pre-Vatican II.

Brian: And you have found a lot of young Catholics like that?

“A significant number, I have heard far more young people ask the question, “Why aren’t we doing this?”—meaning why aren’t we doing something that was perhaps more of an expression of pre-Vatican II Catholicism—than I hear older people say. For example, “Why don’t we have mass in Latin?” That is one of the things that they talk about.”

Similarly, in an interview at another parish, a respondent mentions,

“It seems recently there’s kind of a trend to be pre-Vatican II now. Like, from talking with my husband about his students in high school, there seems to be people who want to go back to the way it was before Vatican II, because it was more of an identity perhaps. It was more stringent and more kind of like there was a secret code, because it was all Latin and nobody knew what was going on, and somehow maybe that was more magical, which...I can see that. It was more of an identity thing. (Age 25, Teacher)

These all suggest as an alternative hypothesis:

H_{4.6}: Younger Catholics are beginning to return to a pre-Vatican II traditional Catholic identity, such that a curvilinear relationship between cohort and religious identification best measures differences in traditional and liberal Catholic identification.

Examining the importance of cohort for Catholic divisions, in addition to education and other measures of social location, will help us to consider one unique aspect of Catholicism—Vatican II.

A GLOBAL FAITH

Recognizing that “catholic” means “universal” at its root, it is important to consider Catholicism’s global nature- and how this impacts American Catholic religious identity. Numbering 60 to 65 million, American Catholics comprise only about 5-6% of

Catholics worldwide, and American Catholicism has been, for much of its history, an immigrant Church. Following legislative changes in the 1920s, the massive waves of Catholic migration that had occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries largely ended, and Catholic ethnic communities no longer saw a steady stream of new immigrants. In fact, by the 1950s, the American Catholic Church began shifting away from its previous identity as an immigrant Church. In the 1960s, however, reforms in U.S. immigration law re-opened the door to large scale immigration from abroad, and large numbers of Catholics again began choosing to emigrate to the U.S. Today, one-quarter to one-third of Catholics within the U.S. are first or second generation immigrants. Unlike earlier Catholic immigrants, though, these newcomers are largely from non-European countries and locales (especially in Latin America). As a result, the new immigrants differ from their earlier counterparts, not only in their recentness of migration but also in their race and/or ethnicity.

In addition to racial/ethnic differences from earlier migrations, recent immigrants are entering a changing Church that is re-contemplating issues of diversity and uniformity following Vatican II. Furthermore, many new Catholic immigrants have arrived in Los Angeles; with the southwest serving as the major gateway for Catholic migration to the U.S. since 1960, rather than New York and the old ethnic centers of the Northeast. Thus, institutional and cultural mechanisms of segregation and assimilation developed in the Northeast that may no longer apply or may be applied quite differently today in comparison to earlier time periods. As a result, it is not clear whether or how immigration and/or ethnic and racial diversity in the American Catholic Church today might affect religious identification as a traditional or liberal Catholic.

Unfortunately, my in-depth interviews included only one Hispanic respondent and three African American respondents. While my interviews with these respondents indicated similar understandings of Catholic religious identities as others, because of their small number, I cannot be sure that traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholic identities have the same meanings for these different racial/ethnic groups. One interesting comment during the interview with my lone Hispanic, a self-identified liberal Catholic, was her mention of the importance of ethnic religious practices and the differing “religious culture” of her former Hispanic neighborhood in San Antonio as compared to her current parish in the Midwest. She said,

“In San Antonio there is absolutely a different religious culture, but before I moved here, I moved to South Bend and so that was really a big change. My family, we tended to go to non-Hispanic, Catholic Churches. Except my mother now goes to a Catholic Church that’s mostly Mexican-American. I think that the big thing is that we would do “Posadas.” A Posada is when...it’s basically a reenactment of Mary and Joseph looking for a room to be able to give birth to Jesus. And so it’s this big party and people go along from house to house and it’s staged and we sing particular songs and we knock at doors, and they keep saying no, and then finally they say yes, and there’s a party. So yeah, so the Posadas that we did in San Antonio. We even did it in our neighborhood in San Antonio because there’s a neighborhood church. So I’ve done that and we’ve done a lot of things where we go to, like I was at a, for Christmas two years ago we went to mass in the Cathedral in San Antonio, so I’m used to hearing mass done in Spanish and I’m used to having, when I was, I grew up actually in Corpus Christi, we had a Cursillo, so we’d go to the Spanish mass Saturday evenings and they’d have these Spanish choirs. A very proud, mostly Mexican American adults, very proud Mexican American adults. And they would do a lot of songs in Spanish and have a lot of like, I’m not sure exactly what this is, but there’s a lot of ribbons, they wear this corsage with a lot of ribbons. Some kind of Cursillo thing, and so yeah, that was, it feels more white bred when I went to South Bend and especially here.”

Thus, she suggests that this religious culture is connected to ethnic religious practices.

For Catholics, ethnic identification may be associated with a traditional religious identity, since ethnic religious practices often revolve around practices that were brought

with them from their culture of origin rather than adopted in America. This would be especially true of immigrant communities. In addition, because racial and ethnic minorities are largely segregated into distinct ethnic/racial neighborhoods (cite American Apartheid), they are often still served by separate Catholic parishes (cite Emerson's new book) and therefore segregated within the Catholic Church. As the quote above indicates, the religious culture of the neighborhood and parish among racial and ethnic minorities, especially recent immigrants, may be a source of differing religious identification. Exploring the relationship between immigrant status and religious identity, as well as the racial/ethnic differences in religious identification, is a small first step in understanding this complicated web of neighborhood, parish, immigration, ethnicity, and race. Thus, I propose as initial hypotheses:

H_{4.7}: First and second generation Catholics are more likely to identify as traditional Catholics, since their religious practices often revolve around practices that were brought with them from their culture of origin rather than adopted in America.

And

H_{4.8}: Racial/ethnic minorities are likely to differ from non-Hispanic whites in their religious identification because they are segregated in their own parishes and develop their own religious culture.

THE SOCIAL BASES OF CATHOLIC DIVISION

To uncover the various social cleavages that form the basis for identifying oneself as a traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholic and to contrast these with the social bases of politics, I regress both Catholic religious identification and party identification on a

variety of social and demographic variables. Multinomial logit is especially well-suited for analyses of nominal dependent variables with multiple categories of interest, so I conduct all of my analyses using multinomial logistic regression. The data for these analyses are from the pooled 1998 and 2000 General Social Surveys (GSS) in which questions regarding Catholic religious identity were asked. The GSS is a nationally representative survey conducted biennially and 977 Catholics answered questions regarding their religious identity in the two survey years.

Dependent Variables

My dependent variables are Catholic religious identification and party identification. The measure for religious identification is derived from answers to the following question:

“When it comes to your religious identity, would you say you are a traditional, moderate, or liberal catholic or do none of these describe you?”

This question, which is identical to the forced-choice question in my in-depth interviews, was answered by all 977 Catholics in my sample and is constructed as a nominal variable with possible answers of “traditional Catholic,” “moderate Catholic,” “liberal Catholic,” or “none of the above.” Similarly, the measure for political party identification is derived from answers to the following question:

“Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?”

This is also constructed as a nominal variable with possible answers of “Republican” “Independent,” “Democrat,” or “Other.” In the sample of 977 Catholics that answered the religious identification item, 16 of them indicated “other” as party identification or

refused to answer the question. These were too few cases for me to include in my analyses, so they were dropped from my analyses.

Independent Variables

My key independent variables measure variation in education, cohort, ethnicity, and immigrant status (i.e. foreign born parentage). Educational differences are emphasized as the source of religious divisions by Wuthnow, so I measure education in three different ways. First, I measure it as a multiple dummy variable series indicating the highest degree attained (*High School*, *Junior College*, *Bachelor*, or *Graduate*, with *Less than a High School Diploma* as the base category). I also measure *Education* linearly as years of schooling completed. Finally, I explore a curvilinear effect of education by including a measure of *Education Squared*.

Since Davidson and others have emphasized birth cohorts socialized before, during and after Vatican II as a source of Catholic divisions, I measure birth cohort in several different ways as well. First, I employ a multiple dummy variable for generation of birth that is labeled *Vatican II Generation* for a person born 1945 to 1965 (meaning the person was a child under the age of 18 at some point during Vatican II) and *Post-Vatican II Generation* for a person born after 1965 (the year Vatican II ended), with a base category of *Pre-Vatican II Generation* for those born prior to 1945 (born and raised to adulthood entirely in the Pre-Vatican II Church). I also measure birth *cohort* linearly as year of birth. Finally, I include a *cohort-squared* term in order to consider a curvilinear effect of cohort.

Since I noted the global nature of the Catholic Church and the importance of increased immigration since the 1960s in understanding the modern American Catholic

Church, I examine whether respondents' parents are native born with a dummy variable measuring parent's birth status (with respondents' having at least one *foreign-born parent* compared to those with *all-native parentage*). This measure of foreign born parentage serves as a proxy indicating first or second generation immigrant status. As measures of ethnicity and race, I include multiple dummies for *Hispanic*, *Asian*, *Black*, and *other Race*, with *NonHispanic White* as the base category.

To explore various aspects of class and employment, I include a dummy variable for the *self-employed* as well as multiple dummies for occupation (*Managers and Professionals* or *Service Workers* with *Manual Workers* as the base category). I also include a measure of *Family Income* in dollars.

Because sociological research has consistently found large gender differences in religious participation and belief (Miller and Stark 2002) and because D'Antonio et al. (2001) emphasize the importance of gender in understanding Catholic religious differences, I include a dummy variable for *female* (vs. male) to examine whether there are gender differences in Catholic identification. Because so many of the key issues dividing traditional and liberal Catholics are connected to gender and sexuality, it is important to consider how gender effects religious identification. Family life cycle theory has also commented on the importance of marriage and family formation as life transition events that lead to greater religious participation and changes in religious beliefs (e.g., Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy and Waite 1995). Therefore, I include a multiple dummy variable series identifying *never married*, *divorced*, *separated*, and *widowed*, with *currently married* as the base category. Finally, since my in-depth interviews were all conducted in the Midwest and because Hunter hypothesizes the south as an oasis from

modern influences, I test whether region (*East*, *West*, and *South* with *Midwest* as the base category) affects the labels Catholics use for themselves.

Analytic Strategy

After dropping cases with missing data on any of the variables, my final sample includes 758 cases. First, I explore Catholics religious identification with this sample. I begin by comparing various model specifications using the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) to choose a preferred overall model. I then use this preferred model to examine the effects of the various independent variables on identification as a traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholic. Finally, I contrast this model of the social bases of religious identification with a similarly specified model for political party identification.

RESULTS

In Table 4.1 below, I show the values of the BIC for all the various possible parameterizations of education and cohort proposed in my earlier hypotheses. I find that a model with a linear effect of cohort (as year of birth) and a linear effect of education (as years of schooling completed) produces the smallest BIC (Model 4 is thus identified as my preferred model). Models with a curvilinear effect of education (as years of schooling and years of schooling squared) and models with dummy variables for degree completed all have larger BIC scores. Thus, they were removed from consideration, and I reject H4.2 and H4.3. The same is true of models estimating a curvilinear effect of cohort (as year of birth and year of birth squared) and those with discrete categories for generation. Thus, I also reject H4.5 and H4.6. These results indicate that H4.1 and H4.4 are the hypotheses that receive the best support. Higher education (as years of schooling) is linearly related to the odds of identifying as a traditional vs. a liberal Catholic.

Similarly, a linear effect of birth year best operationalizes cohort effects and suggests that processes such as the diffusion of a post-Vatican II culture occurs gradually over time

Table 4.1. Model Fit Statistics for Various Multinomial Logit Models of Catholic Religious Identification

	Log-Likelihood	Degrees of Freedom	BIC
(1) Cohort (in generations) + education (linear as years of schooling) + control variables	-966.297	716	-2831.8
(2) Cohort (in generations) + education (curvilinear as years of schooling and years of schooling squared) + control variables	-965.474	713	-2813.5
(3) Cohort (in generations) + educational level (in degree attained) + control variables	-958.913	707	-2786.7
(4) Cohort (linear as birth year) + education (linear as years of schooling) + control variables (<i>Preferred Model</i>)	-967.136	719	-2850.1
(5) Cohort (linear as birth year) + education (curvilinear as years of schooling and years of schooling Squared) + control variables	-966.364	716	-2831.6
(6) Cohort (linear as birth year) + educational level (in degree attained) + control variables	-959.698	710	-2805.1
(7) Cohort (curvilinear as birth year and birth year squared) + education (as years of schooling) + control variables	-966.351	716	-2831.7
(8) Cohort (curvilinear as birth year and birth year squared) + education (curvilinear as years of schooling and years of schooling squared) + control variables	-965.662	713	-2813.1
(9) Cohort (curvilinear as birth year and birth year squared) + educational level (in degree attained) + control variables	-959.096	707	-2786.3

rather than all at once. The results of the preferred model, with a linear effect of both education and cohort, are shown in Table 4.2.

The odds ratios in Table 4.2 are calculated using estimates from a multinomial logistic regression of Catholic Religious Identification in which the available response categories are “traditional Catholic,” “moderate Catholic,” “liberal Catholic,” or “none of the above,” with liberal Catholic chosen as the comparison group (base category). Since

all of the social cleavages that I discuss are visible when considering traditional vs. liberal Catholic identification, I focus on the odds ratios, given in the first column, corresponding to this comparison. An asterisk next to a coefficient in this column indicates a significant preference for traditional Catholic identification as opposed to liberal Catholic with regard to that independent variable.

TABLE 4.2. Odds Ratios from Multinomial Logit of Catholic Identification, General Social Survey, Catholic Subsample 1998 & 2000

Model 4 (Preferred Model)	Traditional vs. Liberal	Moderate vs. Liberal	No Identification vs. Liberal
<i>Variables</i>			
Socio-Economic and Demographic Variables			
<i>Cohort (Year of Birth)</i>	0.97 **	0.98 *	1.01
<i>Education (Years of Schooling Completed)</i>	0.91 *	0.96	0.83 **
<i>Female</i>	1.07	0.81	0.83
<i>Self-Employed</i>	0.55	0.49 *	0.53
<i>Family Income (in \$10,000s)</i>	1.04	1.03	0.99
<i>Managers and Professionals (vs. Manual Workers)</i>	0.51 *	1.05	0.54
<i>Service Workers</i>	0.75	1.07	0.67
Marital Status			
<i>Widowed (vs. Married)</i>	0.85	0.66	0.73
<i>Divorced</i>	0.47 *	0.52 *	1.11
<i>Separated</i>	0.11 **	0.67	0.37
<i>Never Married</i>	0.60	0.68	0.81
Parentage and Race/Ethnicity			
<i>Foreign-Born or Foreign-Born Parents</i>	1.42	1.65	1.31
<i>Asian American (vs. NonHispanic White)</i>	1.72	0.66	0.69
<i>Black</i>	2.90 *	0.37	1.22
<i>Hispanic American</i>	2.23 **	1.07	0.99
<i>Other Race</i>	2.15	2.96	1.65
Region			
<i>East (vs. Midwest)</i>	0.96	1.02	1.39
<i>West</i>	1.18	1.32	1.71
<i>South</i>	1.16	1.13	1.08

NOTE. N=758

* $P < .05$ ** $P < .01$.

Consistent with Wuthnow's discussion of the importance of education for religious divisions, I find that the odds of well-educated Catholics identifying themselves as traditional are significantly lower than those for less-educated Catholics. To better illustrate this finding, I construct a graph indicating the probability of an average respondent identifying her/himself as a traditional Catholic, moderate Catholic, or liberal Catholic as education varies. (I calculated these values using overall sample means for all independent variables except education. Note also that I do not show the probability of choosing "none of the above" so the probabilities on the graph do not always add up to 100%). In Figure 4.1 below, we see that the higher the education, the more likely is

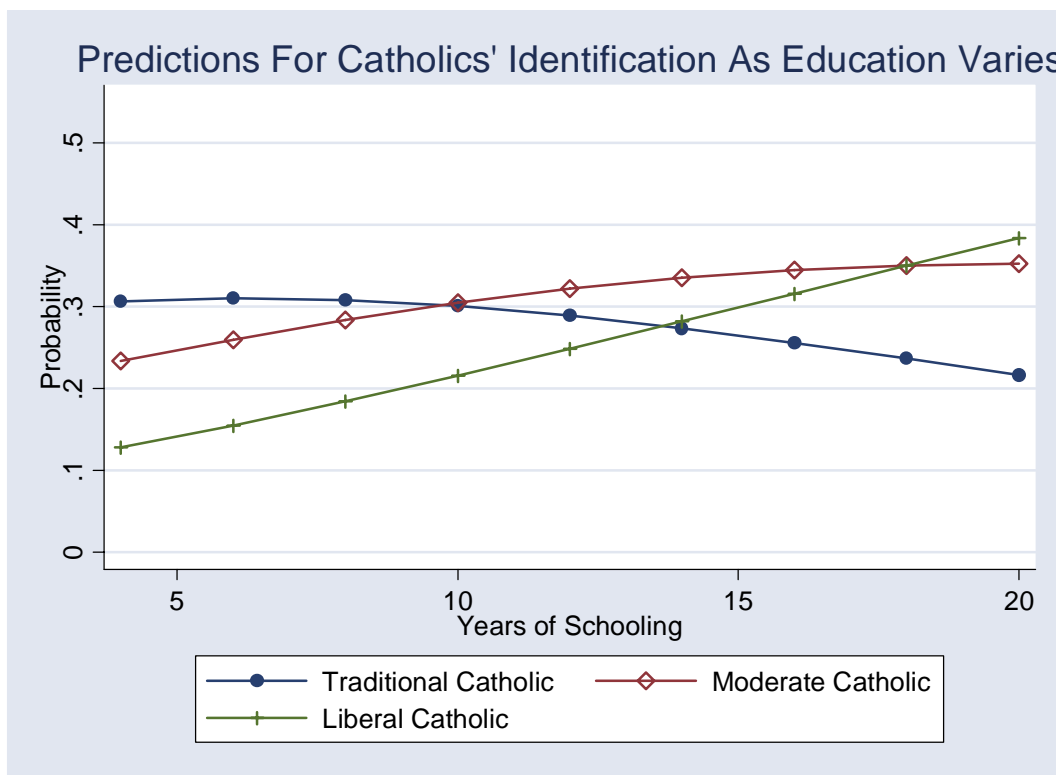


Figure 4.1

identification as a liberal Catholic and the less likely identification as a traditional Catholic. Moderate Catholic identification also increases slightly with education but this

flattens off after 16 years of schooling (4 years of college). In this figure, the crossing point for traditional and liberal identification is just under 14 years of schooling. With other variables held at the sample mean, individuals with a high school diploma or less are more likely to identify as a traditional Catholic than as a liberal Catholic, whereas individuals with at least two years of post high school education are more likely to identify as a liberal Catholic than as a traditional Catholic.

Consistent with the research of D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Meyer (2001, Davidson et al. 1997) that found generational differences in religious beliefs and attitudes, I find that cohort (defined as year of birth) is significantly associated with identifying oneself as a traditional Catholic or a moderate Catholic in comparison to liberal Catholic identification. To illustrate this finding and to allow for easy comparison with the effect of education, I construct a graph indicating the probability of an average individual identifying as a traditional, moderate, or liberal Catholic as cohort, or year of birth, varies. (Again, I calculated these values using overall sample means for all independent variables except cohort, and I do not show the probability of choosing "none of the above.")

Looking at Figure 4.2 below, the more recently an individual was born, the more likely she or he is to identify as a liberal Catholic and the less likely she or he is to identify as a traditional Catholic. Moderate Catholic identification is relatively stable across all birth years although it does begin to decrease slightly among more recent cohorts. The effects of cohort are also largely consistent with previous researchers' emphasis on the importance of Vatican II as a transitional point in Catholic identity. In this figure, the crossing point for traditional and liberal identification is 1956 (six years

prior to the start of Vatican II). Looking at what identification is most likely to be chosen by each cohort, I find that for those born prior to 1943 the most likely identification chosen is traditional Catholic. These are individuals who would have been 19 years old or older when Vatican II began. For those born from 1943 to 1965, however, the most likely identification is moderate Catholic. These are individuals who for the most part would have grown up in both the pre and post Vatican II worlds (the Second Vatican Council was from 1962 to 1965). Finally for those individuals born post-Vatican II (born after 1965), the most likely identification chosen is liberal Catholic.

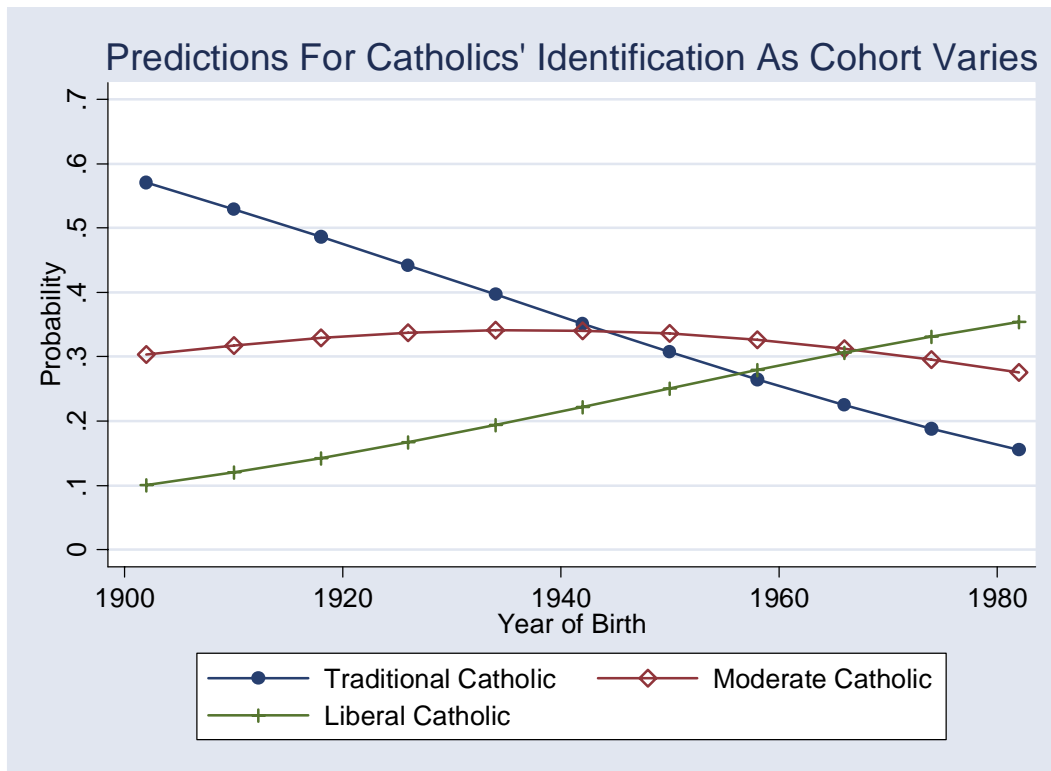


Figure 4.2

Comparing this graph with Figure 4.1 earlier, one sees that changes in cohort lead to a larger overall shift in religious identification than does education. Another way of considering the relative importance of education and cohort is to examine standardized

coefficients. Such coefficients also indicate that cohort (-.52) has a much larger negative effect on identifying as a traditional Catholic vs. a liberal Catholic than does education (-.27). I should also note in discussing cohort effects that these could also be age effects. Without longitudinal data (or at least more years of cross-sectional data), I cannot adequately distinguish between age and cohort, but I follow other researchers (D'Antonio et al. 2001) in interpreting these as cohort effects. Such an interpretation is consistent with theories of identity socialization like that found in Alwin's (1997) study of political identification and its relative stability over time. As I noted in a footnote in chapter 2, however, some of my respondents actually argued for age effects on religious identification by suggesting that older people are more cautious of change in all institutions (not just religion) because they have made more mistakes and seen more negative consequences of change in their longer life, and thus they are more likely to identify as traditional Catholics. Distinguishing cohort and age effects will be an important consideration for future research.

Examining marital status, I find that divorced and separated Catholics are significantly less likely to identify as traditional vs. liberal Catholics when compared to those who are currently married. In fact the odds of identifying as a traditional vs. a liberal Catholic are 48% lower for divorced Catholics and 90% lower for separated Catholics (in comparison to currently married Catholics). The difference between never married Catholics and currently married Catholics is also nearly significant ($p < .07$). Considering those who are married as compared to the never married, the causal direction of this relationship is likely somewhat recursive. While for some individuals, marriage and family formation may serve to re-introduce them to active Church life and allow the

creation of a new religious identity or lead to a shift in their identity, for others, the differing attitudes of traditional vs. liberal Catholics towards marriage (traditional Catholics view marriage more favorably) may simply make traditional Catholics more likely to get married. Thus, differences between never married and currently married Catholics may be a result of either self-selection or life course transition.

Similarly, since traditional Catholicism has had a condemning view of divorce (and separation), it is not surprising that Catholics who are divorced and separated would identify with a more liberal interpretation of Catholicism. Again, however, the causal direction is probably mixed, with traditional Catholics being less likely to get divorced or be separated than liberal Catholics, in which case the correlation between these marital states and identification as a traditional or liberal Catholic would be the consequence and not the cause of the identity, but for some traditional Catholics getting divorced may lead to a re-evaluation of one's beliefs and a re-definition of oneself as a liberal Catholic. In the case of divorce and separation, traditional Catholics clearly suffer from internal conflict due to dissonance between their professed ideals and current lived situation. Several of my respondents spoke to this difficulty. Deirdre, who identifies as a traditional Catholic, talks about how tough it has been to reconcile her religion and her recent divorce.

“Well, being Catholic, marriage is very sacred. It's held in high esteem and respect. I think it's, it's a life long commitment like your faith is. Like I said I feel bad talking about this because I feel like I'm a hypocrite because I have just recently been divorced but divorce is not easy. I've always been taught in the Church that divorce is a sin you can't get married again, you can never receive communion. That's where it played a role in mine because I tossed that back and forth for months. Will I be accepted, will I be condemned, will I think less of in the Church, will people look at me because I'm divorced? And that's from the teachings of the Church. For about 3 months I did not go to church, because I was ashamed. I felt less of a woman because I could not make the marriage work.

It sounds silly but I felt like less of a Catholic if that's even, you know, possible. I felt like people looked down on me, judged me. Oh, she didn't give it enough time or whatever. But I then talked to my uncle who's a missionary priest and to Fr. Doug and it's not a mistake if you've learned from it that's my belief. It, like I said, it took a while and I still to this day feel...not so much out of place, but just not quite before what I had when I was married. Because when you're a little girl you dream of getting married and the white gown and it took longer honestly to prepare for the wedding than I was married and I feel still that I'm a failure." (Age 36, Teacher at a Hebrew School)

Some of my respondent's also emphasize that groups for recently divorced Catholics are often associated with liberal Catholics and as a result divorce might lead to the development of networks whereby formerly traditional Catholics begin to socialize with liberal Catholics. Thus, separation and/or divorce may be especially important life course transitions where changes or shifts in religious identity from traditional to liberal may become more appealing and thus more likely for Catholics. Without longitudinal data, I cannot judge the relative importance of these two competing interpretations, but simply note that both possibilities are in line with the observed associations.

Considering foreign born-parentage, I find no significant effect of this on identification as a traditional or liberal Catholic. While models excluding racial and ethnic status did show a significant effect, inclusion of race and ethnic measures removed its significance. Thus, I must reject H4.7. Rather than being a consequence of immigrant status, it seems more likely that increased identification as a traditional Catholic is the result of the development of distinctive religious cultures in racially and ethnically segregated neighborhoods and parishes. Still, the fact that 41% of Hispanic Catholics and 21% of African American Catholics in my sample are first- or second-generation immigrants is probably important for the distinctive character of these parishes and

neighborhoods. Almost all of the Asian American Catholics (40 out of 41) in my sample are also first- or second-generation immigrants.

Regarding race and ethnicity, I find that the odds of Hispanics and African American Catholics identifying as traditional vs. liberal Catholics are 174% and 248% higher, respectively, than non-Hispanic whites. Asian Americans, however, do not differ significantly from non-Hispanic whites in their identification. Thus, I accept H4.8 with regard to Hispanics and African Americans but not for Asian Americans.¹ It is not clear, however, why Asian Americans would not also develop a traditional religious identity. Still, this finding highlights an area for future research.

Again, I want to suggest that these racial and ethnic differences are likely connected not only to ethnic religious practices and folkways but also to the distinctive neighborhoods and parishes that develop as a consequence of racial and ethnic separatism among U.S. Catholics. Hispanics are segregated within American society and have not yet been assimilated into the Catholic Church the way earlier ethnic groups were. African American Catholics, too, have historically been segregated into separate Catholic parishes. For example, the Josephite religious order was begun with the specific mission of proselytizing among African Americans and is today a major source of African American priests in the U.S. Finally, political researchers have generally characterized Hispanics and African Americans as socially conservative but economically liberal. This, too, may affect their choice of religious identity or indeed may be a consequence of it.

¹ As I mentioned earlier, because I have so few non-whites and Hispanics in my in-depth interviews, I cannot be sure that Hispanics' and African Americans' identity as a "traditional Catholic" is identical to the religious identity that I described in chapter two.

Finally, I should point out which socio-demographic variables are not important for understanding religious division. Economic circumstance is largely insignificant in determining religious identification. Contrary to Hunter's description of the orthodox as economically disadvantaged, I find that traditional Catholics do not differ significantly from liberals in terms of family income (in fact, the coefficient is actually in the direction of traditional Catholics having higher family incomes rather than lower), nor do the self-employed appear to differ from other workers. Individuals in managerial and professional jobs, however, are somewhat more likely to identify as liberal Catholics (vs. traditional) than are manual workers. Gender has no significant effect on religious identification. While D'Antonio et al. (2001) found Catholic women to be less accepting of Church authority in the realm of sexuality than men and sociologists of religion have consistently found women in general to be more religious than men, gender does not differentiate Catholics in terms of their choice of Catholic identity. Finally, region has no effect on religious identification as a traditional, moderate or liberal Catholic, which is comforting since my in-depth interviews were in the Midwest.

SOCIAL BASES OF CATHOLICS' PARTY IDENTIFICATION

I now consider the social sources of Catholics' party affiliation and contrast this with my earlier results for religious identification. The odds ratios in Table 4.3 are calculated using estimates from a multinomial logistic regression of party identification using the same independent variables as I used earlier for religious identification. The response categories are "Republican" "Independent," and "Democrat," with Democrat chosen as the comparison group (base category). Again, an asterisk next to a coefficient in the first

column indicates a significant preference for Republican Party identification as opposed to Democrat with regard to that independent variable.

TABLE 4.3. Odds Ratios from Multinomial Logit of Political Identification, General Social Survey, Catholic Subsample 1998 & 2000

<i>Variables</i>	Republican vs. Democrat		Independent vs. Democrat	
Socio-Economic and Demographic Variables				
<i>Cohort</i>	1.025	**	1.023	**
<i>Education</i>	1.001		0.990	
<i>Female</i>	0.272	**	0.591	**
<i>Self-Employed</i>	1.979	*	0.731	
<i>Family Income (in \$10,000s)</i>	1.090	*	1.023	
<i>Managers and Professionals</i> <i>(vs. Manual Workers)</i>	2.373	**	0.971	
<i>Service Workers</i>	2.223	**	1.050	
Marital Status				
<i>Widowed (vs. Married)</i>	0.752		0.453	
<i>Divorced</i>	0.894		1.100	
<i>Separated</i>	0.468		1.207	
<i>Never Married</i>	0.556	*	0.888	
Race				
<i>Asian American (vs. NonHispanic White)</i>	1.129		2.238	
<i>Black</i>	0.072	*	0.623	
<i>Hispanic American</i>	0.254	**	0.581	*
<i>Other Race</i>	0.331		1.126	
Region				
<i>East (vs. Midwest)</i>	0.630		0.678	
<i>West</i>	0.806		0.424	**
<i>South</i>	1.096		0.792	

NOTE. N=758

* $P < .05$ ** $P < .01$.

There are very clear differences in these results as compared to table 4.2. Whereas I found that educational differences played an important role in religious divisions, I find that the odds of Catholics identifying themselves as a Democrat or Republican are unaffected by years of schooling. To illustrate this point, I construct a graph (Figure 4.3) indicating the probability of an average respondent identifying her/himself as a Democrat, Independent or Republican as education varies. (As before, I calculated these

values using overall sample means for all independent variables except education, and here all probabilities add up to 100%). In Figure 4.3, we see that regardless of education level Catholics party identification stays at the same basic level with Catholics most likely to identify as an Independent or Democrat and less likely to identify as a Republican. Family status is also generally less associated with party identification than it is with religious identification, although never married individuals are more likely to identify as Democrats than as Republicans.

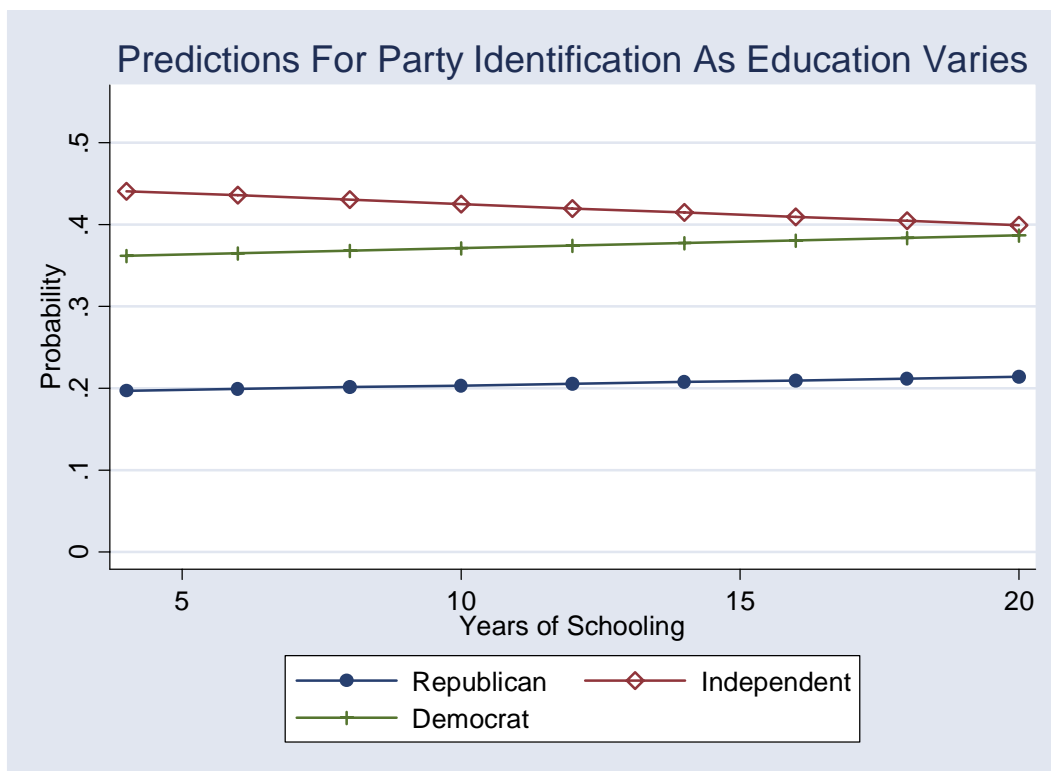


Figure 4.3

What is important for party identification? Gender and class-based cleavages such as blue-collar vs. white collar work and family income are very important. This contrasts sharply with what I found for religious identification. To provide an illustration of this sharp contrast between political and religious divisions, I created a table indicating the

predicted probabilities for party identification and also religious identification for a man and a woman with differing class positions (see Table 4.4 below). This table helps to show how much more variation there is in party identification than in religious identification when gender and class position are considered.

Table 4.4. Contrasting the Gender and Class Cleavages of Party Identification with their lack in Religious Identification

	Female Employee Manual Worker <u>Earning \$20,000</u>	Male Self-employed Service Sector Worker <u>Earning \$100,000</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Probability of identifying as a...			
...Republican	0.07	0.66	0.59
...Independent	0.42	0.20	-0.22
...Democrat	0.51	0.14	-0.37
...Traditional Catholic	0.35	0.27	-0.08
...Moderate Catholic	0.26	0.31	0.05
...Liberal Catholic	0.24	0.34	0.10
...None of the Above	0.15	0.08	-0.07

Note: All other variables are set at the sample means in calculating the probabilities

While a female manual worker earning \$20,000 has only a .07 probability of identifying as a Republican and a .51 probability of identifying as a Democrat, a man who is self-employed in the service sector and earning \$100,000 a year has a .66 probability of identifying as a Republican but only a .14 probability of identifying as a Democrat. (Note that in calculating these probabilities all of the other variables are set at their sample mean.) As I indicate in the table, this is an increase of .59 in the probability of identifying as a Republican, and a decrease of .37 in the probability of identifying as a

Democrat, when comparing the female, blue-collar type to the male, white-collar type individual.

When I consider how these gender and class differences affect religious identification, however, I can simply note their lack of importance. The male white-collar type is actually predicted to be slightly less likely to identify as a traditional Catholic and slightly more likely to identify as a liberal Catholic, but we should not make much of these (slight) changes because none of the variable changes involved in this calculation have a significant effect on religious identification.

I find no significant effect of foreign born-parentage on party identification, just as I found no independent effect of it on religious identification. Hispanic and African American Catholics are much less likely to identify as Republicans and much more likely to identify as Democrats than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. Both of these groups are also more likely to identify as traditional Catholics.

Finally, cohort has a significant impact on party identification just as it did with religious identification. However, rather than finding that younger Catholics who increasingly identify themselves as liberal Catholics are becoming more Democratic, we actually find that they are becoming much less likely to identify themselves as Democrats. In Figure 4.4, I graph the rise of liberal Catholic identification among younger cohorts and the decrease in Democratic identification. Somewhere in the late 1960s, the two identifications cross such that among today's Catholic eighteen-year olds there are more liberal Catholics than there are Democratic Catholics. We see that a loss of traditional Catholic identification has actually probably helped to sever Catholics' historical link with the Democratic Party.

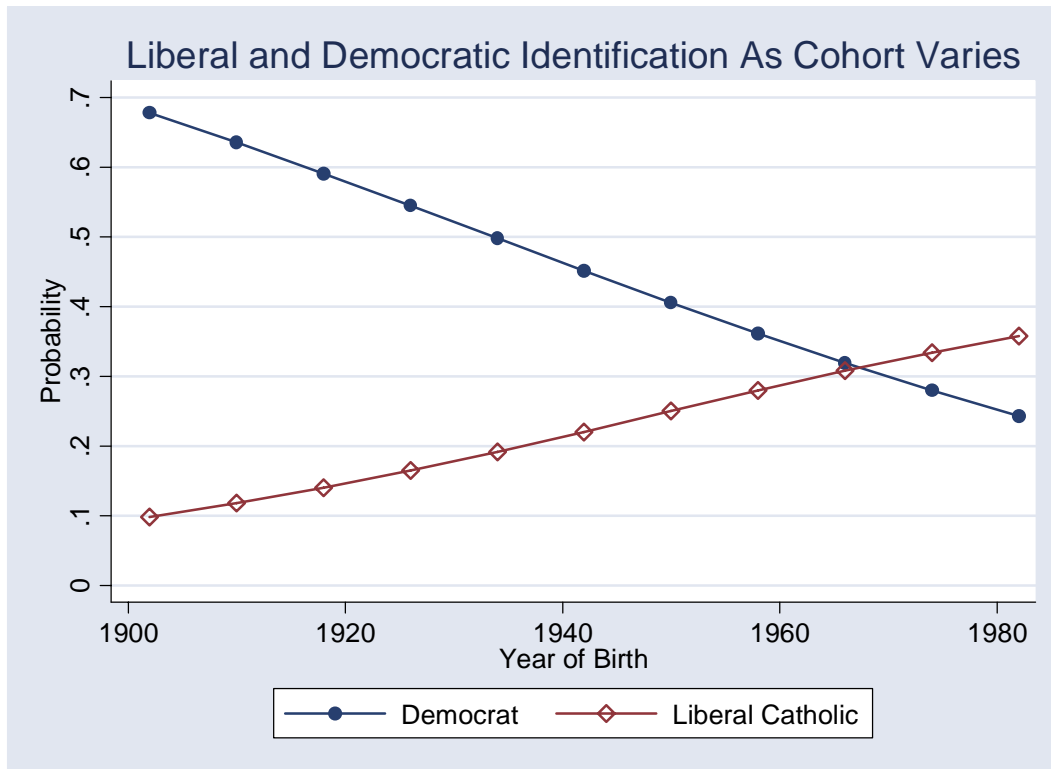


Figure 4.4

This conclusion regarding the way that religious identification, party identification and cohort are linked is not an intuitive finding. Several times in my interviews, people would begin to argue that religious and political divisions overlapped, but when they would start to cite specific individuals, they would find that they did not match their schema. Joan provides one such example when I ask her if religious divisions and political divisions are basically the same thing,

“Well some of the issues are the same, some are different, but it is the same. It is the same type of argument. It’s overlapping between your politics and your religion, but there are also some things that don’t overlap. So I think it is hard to put it in that cubby hole. (Age 61, Housewife)

Brian: And what things do you think of as not overlapping...for example, you talked about the economics part, helping the poor.

“Yeah, that overlaps”

Brian: That overlaps in that liberal Catholics are more likely or less likely...?

“To be Democrat yeah, and they are more likely to want to help the poor than traditional Catholics. Yeah ‘cause I would think...let’s see, my daughters were...I said she would be between moderate and liberal, but she is more Republican...I guess that’s why I say I’m more independent because I don’t like to be labeled. You can label me as being short. You can label me as being battling with depression, as a math tutor, talks too much; those kinds of things. But to put me with this group of people or that group of people. I don’t like to say. You put me in with my sewing group, but don’t tell me we all think the same way. I guess that’s what I don’t like.”

In the end, Joan fails to explain how liberal Catholics can be Republican and ends up just emphasizing the shortcomings of labels.

I conducted analyses similar to those above but replaced party identification with political ideology (measured as a liberal to conservative scale). Results were similar (Democrat=liberal and Republican=conservative) with class and gender cleavages also dominating the differences between conservatives and liberals. The one exception to these similarities is with regard to cohort. Younger cohorts of Catholics are neither more nor less likely to be conservative when compared to older Catholics, despite their reduced likelihood of identifying as a Democrat. This supports my interpretation above, that liberal Catholics have simply severed Catholics’ historical link with Democrats, without necessarily becoming more conservative. My own perception would be that liberal Catholics tend to be more libertarian (rather than either conservative or liberal) in their political thinking when compared to traditional Catholics (c.f., Davis and Robinson 1999)

I conclude that the social sources of religious and political divisions are quite distinct from one another. Whereas gender and class play the essential roles in Catholic political divisions, education and cohort are the keys to understanding religious divisions. Finally, cohort is also important for politics insofar as younger Catholics have severed the

historical link between Catholics and the Democratic party but younger Catholic cohorts are no more or less likely to be conservative as compared to their elders. In the end, these differences in the social sources of politics and religion help to keep religious divisions and political divisions from lining up perfectly with each other. Surely if these religious and political divisions overlapped more the differences between traditional and liberal Catholics would become more conflictual.

“All in the Family:”

Understanding the Intergenerational Nature of Catholic Religious Divisions

I suggest that the intergenerational nature of Catholic religious division helps to explain why the religious divide among Catholics is not more conflictual. As the reader has probably noticed, my respondents often use images of “familial disagreements” when talking about disagreements within the Church. Certainly a part of this language is simply the fact that people think of the Church as a family, but I suggest that, in fact, these differences in identity are often found within families. If traditional and liberal Catholics interact with each other commonly within the context of family relations, then it should not surprise us that traditional and liberal Catholics are able to see something positive in each other’s perspective.

As you may recall, Kelly in Chapter 2 mentions family differences in the context of explaining moderate Catholics when she says,

“Someone who’s not as strict [with regards to the Church] as my parents were. Someone kind of in between me [who’s liberal] and them [who are traditional].”
(Age 59, retired Banquet Server)

Similarly, in the introduction, both Grace and Katie noted differences within their own families, with Grace talking about how some of her grandkids are more liberal and Katie

emphasizing that her Aunts and Uncles were traditional Catholics. In my interviews, there were dozens of examples where respondents would speak of the differences between traditionals and liberals and refer to examples of both within their own family.

Still, before I conclude that these differences are indeed found within families, I consider at least one alternative explanation for cohort differences in religious identification. Perhaps most families are homogeneous with regard to religious identification and the increased percentage of liberal Catholics is simply a result of demographics—that is a consequence of liberal Catholics’ higher fertility than traditional Catholics. This would explain cohort changes without requiring that religious differences are found largely within families. The fact is, however, that in the GSS data traditional Catholics’ fertility is greater than that of liberal Catholics (see Table 4.5 below).

Table 4.5: Fertility by Catholic Identification

	<u>Average Number of Children</u>
Traditional Catholics	2.32
Moderate Catholics	1.81
Liberal Catholics	1.55
None of the Above	1.45

It is not surprising that traditional Catholics have more children, since their beliefs about birth control, abortion, and ideal family size all would lead them to both seek and accept larger families than liberal Catholics. Still, this fact, along with the cohort trends, highlights the reality of traditional Catholic parents having liberal Catholic children. As a result, more contact between traditional and liberal Catholics has probably occurred

within the relatively amicable context of familial relations than in the conflict-oriented context of movement organizations.

Following the lead of Kelley and Evans (1995), it seems likely that the consensual nature of family contact has helped lead to a more consensual view of the broader differences between traditional and liberal Catholics. One of my respondents argues for just this conclusion when she says,

“I think if you exclude the big names in both the traditional and liberal movements that, just in the rank and file, I think it is a healthy thing, I don’t think it’s overly destructive. The only destructive things that I see is when the leaders start to talk because they’re the ones that are taking extreme positions and are accusing the other of not being Catholic, but just because so often it is in the same family that you have that difference that you have to learn to get along and you have to see something good in what the other group’s saying.” (Age 30, Administrative Assistant)

Chapter 5- Conclusion: Holding the Church Together

I often listen to National Public Radio while driving to work. Sometime after Pope John Paul II's death but prior to the election of Pope Benedict XVI, I turned the radio to the local National Public Radio station one morning and heard Fr. Tim Kitzke, the Pastor of Three Holy Women Church in Milwaukee, being interviewed on Morning Edition. During that interview, Steve Inskeep highlighted the issues of priestly celibacy and women's ordination, as well as divisions in the Church with regard to the war in Iraq, birth control, and abortion. For his part, Fr. Tim tried to explain how he deals with divisions in the Church today, and in response to questions regarding the priesthood, Fr. Tim replied:

“I have a very dear spiritual director who in the past told me this: ‘Tim, this is the Church as we’ve been given it.’ I don’t want to be Pollyannaish in this...or unrealistic...I pray for the priesthood daily. Obviously being a priest, I know this is not my Church. It’s not even the institution’s Church. It’s Christ’s Church, and as He has led us this far, He’s going to lead us with all those pressing questions. I don’t mean to fancy dance around the answer of celibacy or women’s ordination. I think it’s important to keep alive a certain sense of dialogue. And also, I do talk to people about it. I talk to women. I talk to individuals who are interested who might not want live in the current structure, but do you then absent yourself from the table and have a bunch of little tables in a cafeteria or do we come back to the main table? (National Public Radio, Morning Edition, April 13, 2005)

Obviously, divisions among Catholics are well recognized today, but they are perhaps just as often misunderstood. Many non-Catholics assume that Catholic religious divisions are directly connected to politics and expect these divisions to lead to polarization within the Church. Instead, as I have shown, while religious issues and divisions among Catholics overlap at times with politics, this overlap is far from perfect, and politics is not the source of divisions between traditional and liberal Catholics. Whereas political divisions among Catholics are rooted mainly in gender and class

differences, religious divisions are based instead on educational differences and, most importantly, cohort changes within the Church as a result of the Second Vatican Council. Consequently, religious divisions are not coterminous with political ones among Catholics. Rather, most Catholics perceive religious divisions as generational and see the differences between traditional and liberal Catholics as healthy for the Church. This is because they see each group as having an important role to play in the Church. Traditional Catholics provide stability for the Church and liberal Catholics force the Church to reconsider itself in light of the gospel and contemporary society.

While John Kennedy's election as President in 1960 symbolized the mainstreaming of American Catholics, John Kerry's electoral loss does not symbolize a displacement of Catholics from the mainstream but highlights their diversification as members of mainstream America. As the single largest denomination in the U.S., Catholics are now key figures at all levels of American society (and both sides of the political spectrum). For instance, in July of 2005, President Bush nominated a Catholic, John Roberts, to the Supreme Court. If approved by the U.S. Senate, he would join three other current Catholic Supreme Court justices (Anthony Kennedy, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas), which would mark Catholics as the largest religious contingent on the Court (there are also three Protestant and two Jewish members on the current Court). In the U.S. Senate, there are 24 Catholics, composed of 11 Republicans and 13 Democrats (as compared to 14 Presbyterians, the second largest denominational affiliation). In the U.S. House of Representatives, there are 129 Catholics, composed of 57 Republicans and 72 Democrats. Baptists have the second largest denominational contingent in the House with 65 representatives (only half the number of Catholics). Clearly, Catholics no longer

must forge their identity in contrast to a hostile Protestant society. Instead, they find themselves helping to define what America is and should be.

Yet while Catholics no longer have to define themselves vis a vis Protestants, their religious identities have become ever more diverse as they have turned inward to re-interpret their own religious selves. As a result, Catholics are now less likely to vote for a Catholic candidate simply because she or he is a Catholic. As the tight-knit Catholic identity (developed in reaction to a hostile outside world) wanes, Catholics now construct their religious identity largely by contrasting themselves with each other. The diversification of Catholic identity does not mean that Catholics no longer have any common identity as Catholics. In fact, certain aspects of Catholicism, especially the Mass and Eucharist, continue to bind Catholics together as one Church. Susan emphasizes this common Catholic identity when she says,

“I mean, you are Catholic from the time you’re born until the time you die. And, whether you choose to practice or not, you’re still Catholic...It’s international, I can go anywhere in the world and find a Catholic church and it’s going to be just the same as it was at home, just in a different language (Age 76, retired from Department of Labor)

I also do not want to suggest that diversity within the Catholic Church is something new. My respondents speak of how the Catholic Church has always been diverse and recognize how the Church’s diversity had led to an accommodation of differences over the years. John notes this when he declares,

“I think that one of the reasons the Catholic church has survived pretty much intact is that it has been able to accept the differences between, say, a Dutch Catholic, an Italian Catholic, [and] an American Catholic. They’re still all Catholics in the Church’s eyes, even though there isn’t a whole lot in common between those three groups.” (Age 53, Cook)

Yet, the development within the American Church of the religious identities of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics (as opposed to religio-ethnic identities of Irish Catholic, Italian Catholic, etc.) is new. In chapter two, I argued that these should be seen as competing but not warring identities. In chapter three, I found that most Catholics are not acquainted with traditional and liberal religious movement organizations but I suggested that these organizations probably play a role in identifying the issues that divide traditional and liberal Catholics to the media. Rather than movement organizations, I argued that Catholic religious identities are constructed in the interactions and everyday lived experiences of Catholics. In chapter four, I considered the social bases of religious divisions and found that generation is the best predictor of religious identity, with education also playing a key role. Finally, I suggested that that these identities are seen as healthy and not as completely divisive and destructive because such differences are often found within families, with traditional Catholic parents having liberal Catholic children (or, as I sometimes found, vice versa). Thus, imagery of the differences between traditionals and liberals as family disagreements were common among my respondents, and they were often able to accept with some affection and respect the viewpoints of other Catholics with competing identities, much as one might be fond of the various faults and quirks of one's family members.

Issues, Orientations, Identities, and Generations

Traditional and liberal Catholic movements have emerged over the past few decades, and movement organizations have developed as a result of specific controversies, often involving issues of sexuality and women's role in the Church. The purpose of such groups is to push their agendas regarding particular issues within the

Church. For instance, groups have developed around the issues of women in the priesthood, the Church's stance on birth control and abortion, the celibate priesthood, and the inclusion of laity in decision-making. Yet, most Catholics are not directly acquainted with these movement organizations and their greatest impact is probably through their interaction with the media.

Even more important than the particular issues dividing traditional and liberal Catholics are differences in two basic orientations. These differences are at the center of disagreements between traditional and liberal Catholics. The first orientation involves Catholics' stances toward the rules of the Church. Carrie, who describes herself as a traditional Catholic, highlights the difference between traditional Catholics' strict adherence to the rules of the Church vs. liberal Catholics' personal (individualistic) interpretation of Church rules by telling the following story:

"I was listening to someone talk about Holy Communion, and the question came up, 'As a non-Catholic, is it ok for me to go up and receive communion?'" And as a traditional Catholic, the answer is no. No ifs, ands, or buts. It's no. There's no, and then you explain. This is our belief. This is what. This is...it's not something that you...it's not up for interpretation you know! Well, it was explained in a way that I'm going WHAT? [laughing] They were saying, "well you want to go by your conscience and if your conscience feels that you are ready to receive communion and you choose to do so, but you really need to go by your conscience" and I'm thinking WHAT, what is this? It either is or it's not. It's yes or no. And if it's yes, explain why it is. But that to me was very, very liberal and I'm thinking no, no, no! This is the way it is, and that is the way it should have been explained." (Age 43, Business Analyst)

Carrie's story illustrates the importance of differing conceptions of "conscience" in disagreements between traditional and liberal Catholics.

The second orientation, one's stance towards change in the Church, might be more properly understood as one's stance towards 'progress' in the Church vs. stability, rather than simply change for change's sake. Still, Cathy, who describes herself as a

liberal Catholic, helps to reveal the underlying differences in this orientation in her responses to several of my questions. For instance, when I ask her if there are any aspects of Catholicism that are so central to her own personal understanding of Catholicism that she would never want to see them changed, she responds,

“Never changed? You don’t mean ‘modified in the light of additional knowledge gained?’ I mean...you mean stuck, you mean Baltimore catechism words ‘forever’?” (Age 64, retired Teacher)

Clearly, rather than finding stability and security in the Church’s unchanging commitments, Cathy is worried that the Church will become “stuck.” Similarly, in speaking of Vatican II, she says,

“Vatican II was far enough for its time, but I think we need another one now, Vatican III. Where I can not just open the windows, but we could put in skylights and sliding glass doors. You know I think it’s time for another one, but I don’t know when we’re going to get a Pope bold enough to call one.”

Finally, she reiterates the idea of change as necessary and suggests that the Church is a living thing and should thus always be oriented towards growth.

“The church, it’s supposed to be a living thing! Living things change, that’s one of the signs of life, it’s change! If you don’t change, you’re dead. And that’s just how it is, if the church doesn’t change it’s dead. It doesn’t go forward if it goes backward. Well, backward it would be changed too and I suppose you could go sort of backward in an experimental mode. I’d just as soon not go back in any experimental mode...”

Thus change, as reform or progress, is contrasted with stagnation, but Cathy also does not want change to involve going backwards; she wants forward movement.

Both of these orientations- towards rules and change- were connected not only to identities, but to generational differences by my respondents. Thus, Jessica says of traditional Catholics:

“I’m thinking, I think of a generational thing, even though I know young people who are traditional Catholics. Where they like everything exactly the way it is. I

think that's part of it. Like they, they really want to keep it the way it is. But I also think, when I think of a traditional Catholic I think of someone who agrees with everything, not necessarily everything but agrees with all major precepts of the Catholic Church. I don't agree with all of them. So, someone like my father who was very committed but didn't want anything to change and really thought that things really didn't need to change." (Age 29, Professor)

As I mentioned in the introduction and again in chapter four, D'Antonio et al. (2001) also stressed generational differences in speaking of changes in Catholic identity. However, because their national surveys did not ask whether respondents identify as traditional, moderate or liberal Catholics, they could not consider whether the generational differences they found are connected to such identities. In most other respects, their findings fit well with the differences I have found between traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics. Especially in their discussion of the locus of moral authority (in the Church hierarchy or the individual) and the notion of "Core vs. Periphery," there are clear echoes of the religious differences described by my self-identified traditional and liberal Catholics. Whereas traditional Catholics highlight the importance of strictly following the rules of the Church, especially with regard to sexuality, liberal Catholics focus on people interpreting Church rules for themselves. Also while liberal Catholics have a "traditional" core when it comes to Church dogma and the Mass, they generally consider Church teachings on sexuality a less important, or peripheral, element of what it means to be Catholic. Traditional Catholics, on the other hand, (while not completely dismissive of the notion that there are elements that are less central to Catholicism) stress their dislike of the idea that people can selfishly "pick and choose" whichever elements they want to follow.

One component generally missing from D'Antonio and his colleagues' discussion of Catholic identity, when contrasted with the differences in religious identity

that I detailed in Chapter 2, is the ingredient of “change” in the Church. A better discussion of how orientations towards “change” and “stability” are linked to religious identity can be found in John McGreevy’s (1996) historical study of Catholics, race relations, and parishes entitled “Parish Boundaries.” McGreevy argued that in the 1950s and 1960s, race divided the Catholic community with some Catholics arguing on behalf of racial integration whereas others fiercely opposed it. Following Vatican II, McGreevy saw two distinctly Catholic visions of church, community, and authority emerge and clash in battles over residential segregation. He argued that both sides created a distinctly Catholic viewpoint. While some focused on a “church of continuity,” stressed the sacramental character of neighborhoods and the social and religious ties that established the parish community, and suggested that segregation (or separation) should be maintained so as not to disrupt the parish community, others focused on a “Church of change” and highlighted the Vatican’s emphasis on the theology of the mystical body of Christ and therefore argued for integration in the Church.¹ These Catholics for a “Church of change” stressed that as one body in Christ Catholics are called to be radically inclusive.

Similarly, traditional Catholics today focus on not disrupting the stable, sacred character of the Church, while liberal Catholics stress the necessity of inclusion of women (and laity and homosexuals) in order for the Church to remain true to the gospel. Unlike the battles over racial integration in the 1960s, however, the Vatican is not on the side of those battling for change but rather on the side of those attempting to maintain the stability of the institutional Church. Perhaps this explains the discrepancy between my

¹McGreevy’s work highlights how being “against change” can sometimes be in conflict with “following the rules” of the Church.

argument that liberal Catholics are committed to striving for change and reform of the Church, and D'Antonio et al.'s suggestion that liberal Catholics are not "committed to the institutional Church." Certainly liberal Catholics are not committed to all of the rules of the hierarchy and are disgruntled as a result, but the ones I interviewed were active members of their local parish and were committed enough to the institutional Church that they continued to strive and hope for real reform. In fact, several liberal Catholics mentioned how they felt disempowered and misunderstood when people suggested that they should just leave the institutional Church.

Katie, who I introduced as a liberal Catholic in Chapter 1, relates how some traditional Catholics suggest that dissenting Catholics should just leave,

"Yeah, I kind of feel like it's like 'Oh those liberal Catholics should just leave; and if you're going to dissent against the Church and if there's that much you don't agree with, then basically, why are you Catholic?' It's like if you don't support the United States and support our troops, and believe in what we're doing and support our president, then why don't you just leave? I mean, this is just ridiculous. It's almost like okay, what do you mean leave? I'm not going to leave the United States and I'm not going to leave the Catholic Church. I would never tell a traditional Catholic who is totally pro-life and totally opposite of my understandings, even farther than the Pope, just agreeing with some of the Church teachings, they're so far right. I would never tell them that they had to leave the Church or that they should just leave. I would never say that. They're part of the family you know? It's the kid you don't like; too bad, you've got to deal with them."

Katie speaks further about an article in the National Catholic Reporter that also suggested that Catholics who are disgruntled should exit the Church,

"There's an article in NCR that Mel (my friend) and I had read yesterday. We picked up the paper and the first thing we read was Colin McCarthy talking about why dissenting Catholics should leave, and it just infuriated both of us and we were talking about writing a letter to the editor or something. It's about the dissenting Catholic leaving and he was saying 'I left the Church; I don't know how you do it. You have all of those hopeful people in there, but I think it's kind of hopeless, (blah, blah, blah).' It just really made us both angry." (SFX2)

Thus, for many liberal Catholics, commitment and hope are essential to their Catholic identity, and they feel attacked when other dissenters tell them they should leave, just as much as when traditional Catholics tell them that they are “not really Catholic.”

As I mentioned in the introduction, Katie’s interview suggests that liberal Catholics find it especially difficult to stay committed, but the liberal Catholics I interviewed successfully accomplished it. Still, it is also clear that while the liberal Catholics I interviewed see themselves as committed to the institutional Church (as opposed to the hierarchy), they are willing, as advocates for change, to suffer the loss of stability, distinctiveness and religious fervor (at least temporarily) due to changes in the institution, in order to have a more inclusive and just Church. And of course, some of the liberal Catholics most disturbed by the Church’s unwavering positions on abortion, homosexuality, celibacy of the priesthood, and the exclusion of women from the priesthood have chosen to leave the Church and thus would not appear among my respondents.

Whither the Future?

It is always dangerous to go beyond one’s analysis and speak to the future. Yet, it is also in part to understand the future that we pursue an examination of the present (and of the past). What does my investigation of traditional, moderate, and liberal Catholics lead me to believe about the future? Or, more importantly, what can it contribute to our imagining of the future of the Church? I want to briefly consider two questions. Will the Catholic Church continue to be divided ideologically? If so, will it continue to be able to avoid polarization and hold together despite these divisions?

Liberal Catholics are increasingly numerous among younger cohorts and the one's I interviewed seem committed enough to their faith that at least some will choose to remain in the Church. At the same time, they are also unwilling to meekly obey the hierarchy or give up their own ideas on issues of sexuality, the priesthood, etc. Thus, unless the Church engages in wholesale excommunications, liberal Catholics are likely to continue dissenting from within the Church and to remain a potent force in American Catholicism.

On the other hand, despite the cohort trend toward declining numbers of traditional Catholics, I do not expect traditional Catholics to disappear in the future either. While trends in Catholic identification currently suggest that virtually no one will identify as a traditional Catholic in cohorts born after 2032, there are good reasons to believe that these trends are likely to alter at some point. First, the Church hierarchy in the U.S. is supportive of a traditional Catholic standpoint. Second, some of my respondents suggest that there may be some revival of traditionalism among the youngest cohort of Catholics. Regardless, even if no change in the cohort trend occurs, 2032 is quite far off and among the most recent cohorts 15 to 20% of respondents in the GSS sample still identify as traditional Catholics. Thus, traditional Catholics are likely to remain an important force within American Catholicism into the foreseeable future.

Just as surely, the issues dividing Catholics are not simply going to disappear or become unimportant—nor should they. They involve key disagreements about the nature of sexuality, the human person, and the priestly persona. Thus, my answer to the first question about whether divisions will remain in the Church is both simple and direct.

Yes, I believe that ideological divisions and competing identities within Catholicism are likely to be present in the American Catholic Church for quite some time to come.

Yet, the current state of avoiding polarization and holding together a Church community with real ideological divides appears in many ways to be a unique accomplishment, and may face greater challenges in the future. What might increase the challenge of avoiding polarization and holding the Church together? First of all, that disagreements between traditional and liberal Catholics currently occur so often within actual families (as opposed to the “family” of the Church) may turn out to be short-lived. This phenomenon could change if cohort trends shift (as I suggested they might above) and this shift coincides with the emergence of greater homogeneity of religious identity within both families and parishes. If so, there would be fewer structural sources of consensual contact between traditional and liberal Catholics in the future. In such circumstances, the current unique accomplishment of both a unified and ideologically diverse Church is likely to require a great deal more work to continue.

If challenges to Catholic unity increase, moderate Catholics will likely find themselves called upon to maintain Church unity. This is especially true because of their potential to be mediators who bridge the gap between traditionals and liberals. Surprisingly, however, my interviews suggest that moderates have not actively adopted such a role thus far. As challenges to Catholic unity increase, however, moderate Catholics willingness to take on this role and their ability to succeed as mediators will be put to the test. If they attempt to bridge the gaps between traditionals and liberals, one of the key things moderates may want to focus on is what holds all Catholics together- what D’Antonio and his colleagues referred to as “the Core” of Catholicism. For instance, the

Mass and the Eucharist are elements of Catholicism that unite traditional and liberal Catholics. By focusing on what unites traditionals and liberals, moderate Catholics can strengthen the bonds that continue to bind Catholics together as one “family.”

Certainly, the Church will still be able to draw upon potent cultural images of divisions within the Church as “familial disagreements.” Returning to the interview I heard on NPR in April of 2005, Fr. Tim did exactly that, drawing upon images of family in trying to explain how he deals with disagreements. In so doing, he provides a model for how such cultural images of family division might continue to be invoked in the future to maintain consensus (even if divisions occur less often within actual families).

Steve Inskeep: When you and I last spoke, we were talking to your parishioners about the war in Iraq, in which some parishioners disagreed with the pope’s view against the war. Some of your parishioners I’m sure have concerns about the pope’s view on birth control or abortion. This must be a difficult argument for you to make sometimes.

Fr. Tim: One of the things I learned very early in my family life is that you’re allowed to disagree or even to be out of the framework of things, as long as you showed up for supper. And I think I’d like to use that same image with Roman Catholics. If it were just a matter of total intellectual assent, I think a lot of people would really struggle. But on the other hand, I would like to look at the Church as one big family- crazy at times, sometimes a little difficult...[emphasis added]

Steve: Sometimes some arguments around the table...

Fr. Tim: Sometimes some arguments around the table...

Steve: Sometimes people get up and walk away from the dinner table...

Fr. Tim: Right. But to know that any true family will never ever close the door.

The new Pope and, most especially, the Church hierarchy in the US could do much worse than to follow Fr. Tim Kitzke’s example of employing such “familial” cultural images when speaking of and dealing with these tensions as they continue to impact the Church

in the future. Only time will tell whether (or how long) these cultural images will retain their power once the divisions within actual families become non-existent or at least less likely to exist.

In the end, the success of American Catholics' attempts to maintain a diverse and unified Church in the twenty-first century may well hinge on how durable are the cultural resources for maintaining unity left to them by the current Church, along with the creativity and ability of moderate Catholics to serve as mediators and bridges between Catholics in the future.

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